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A COMBINED LOCATION & DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

BR 9032(4)

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

HARPER'S BRIDGE

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HELENA, MONTANA 59620

FEBRUARY 3, 1981

Transcript prepared by:
Department of Highways
Preconstruction Bureau
Helena, MT
For Missoula County
March 1983

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NOTICE NOTICE NOTICEA SECOND COMBINED HIGHWAY LOCATION AND DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING

A SECOND Combined Highway Location and Design Public Hearing will be held in the Target Range School at 4095 South Ave. W. in Missoula, Montana on Wednesday, February 23, 1983 at 7:30 p.m., relating to the proposed location and major design features of a proposal to replace the Harper's Bridge, presently located ten miles northwest of Missoula, over the Clark Fork River.

Three (3) alternate crossing sites will be discussed.

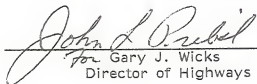
The project will consist of constructing a two-lane, two-way bridge with provisions for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. New two-lane, two-way paved approaches will connect the bridge with the Big Flat Road (County Route 30) on the west side of the river and with the Mullan Road (FAS 263) on the east side. Drainage facilities, signing and other highway related improvements will be constructed. New right-of-way will be required along most of the project.

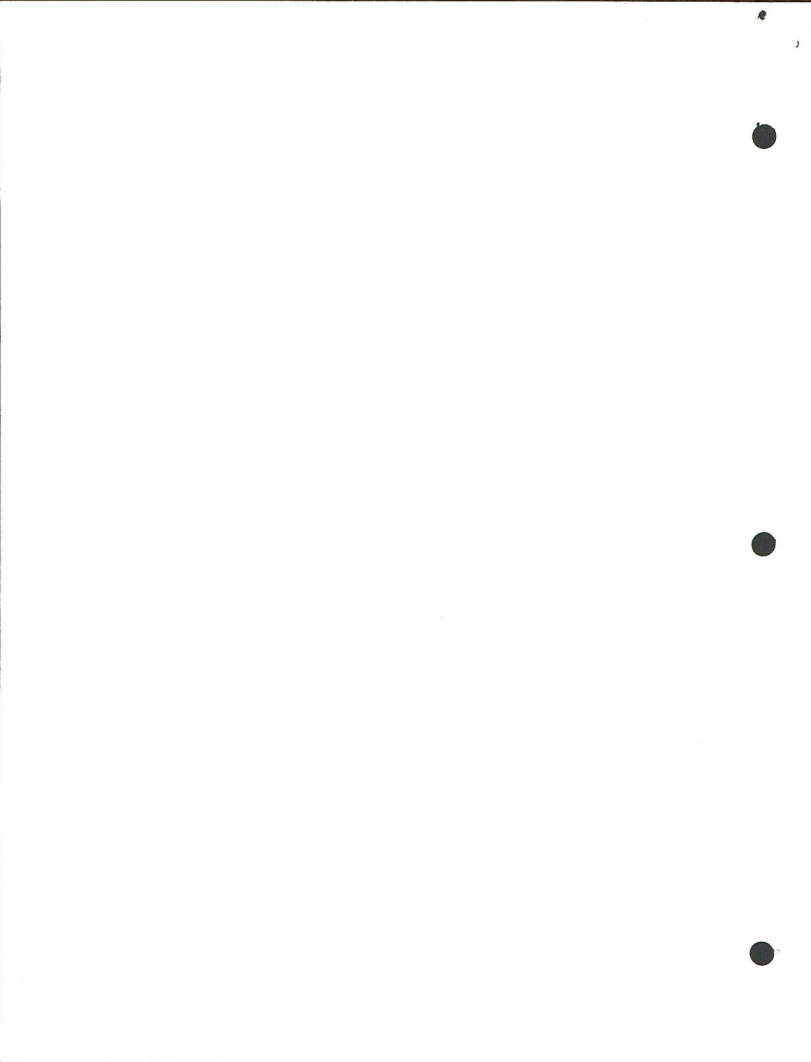
A copy of the Environmental Assessment along with maps, drawings and other pertinent information relating to this project will be available for public inspection and copying at the Department of Highways offices in Missoula and Helena, Montana. Treatment of the encroachment on the floodplain of the Clark Fork River will also be identified. The tentative schedule for right-of-way acquisition and construction as well as relocation assistance will be discussed.

INVITATION IS HEREBY EXTENDED TO ALL PERSONS to attend said Hearing, and if they so desire, to submit written briefs or verbal agreements either for or against the project. Written statements will also be accepted for ten (10) days following the Hearing by the Department's Public Hearings Unit, 2701 Prospect Ave., Helena, Montana 59620.

PROJECT: BR 9032(4)
Harper's Bridge

DATED: January 14, 1983


for Gary J. Wicks
Director of Highways



HARPERS BRIDGE

ALTERNATIVE - A

MISSOULA COUNTY

BRIDGE LENGTH 570 FT.
PROJECT LENGTH 1.6 MI



PREPARED BY MORRISON-MAIERLE, INC



16 0' 4 0' 12 0' 8 0' 4 0' 16 0'

- CENTERLINE

DEPTH OF CUT
AT SLOPE STAKE

HEIGHT OF FILL
AT SLOPE STAKE

TYPICAL SECTION

HARPERS BRIDGE

ALTERNATIVE - B₁

MISSOULA COUNTY

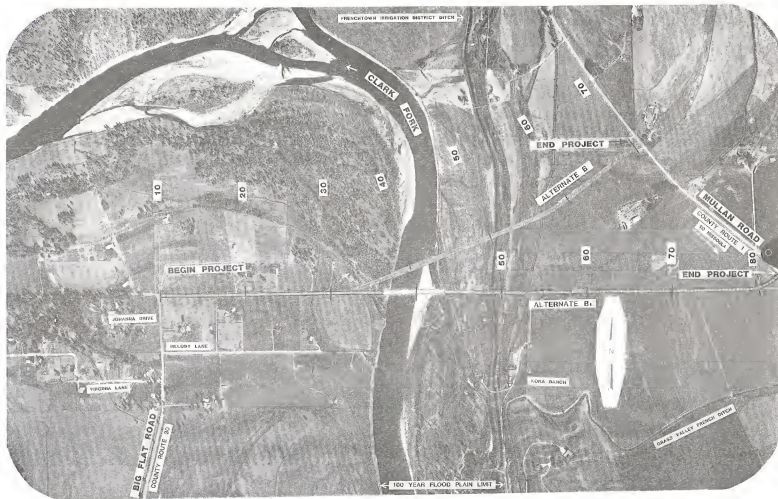
2 OF 3
BR-9032 (4)

ALTERNATE B

BRIDGE LENGTH 660 FT.
PROJECT LENGTH .12 MI

ALTERNATE B₁

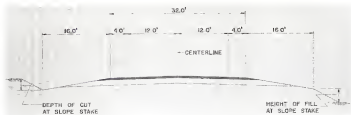
BRIDGE LENGTH 650 FT.
PROJECT LENGTH .14 MI



PREPARED BY MORRISON-MAIERLE, INC.







TYPICAL SECTION

HARPERS BRIDGE ALTERNATIVE - C

MISSOULA COUNTY

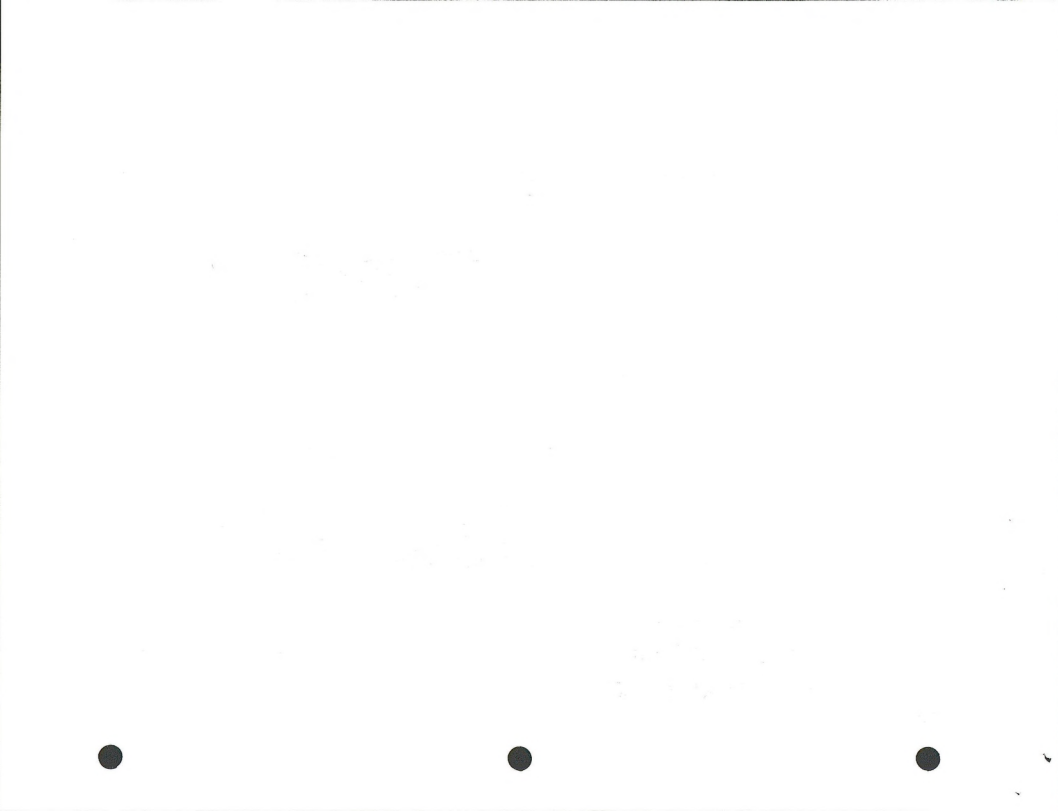
3 OF 3
BR-9032(4)

BRIDGE LENGTH 728 FT.
PROJECT LENGTH 2.7 MI.



PREPARED BY MORRISON - MAIERLE, INC.





The following is the transcript of a second Highway Department Public Hearing held in the Target Range School, 4095 South Avenue in Missoula, Montana on Wednesday, February 23, 1983 at 7:30 P.M. relating to the proposed location and major design features of a County Bridge Project to replace the Harper's Bridge presently located 10 miles northwest of Missoula crossing the Clark Fork River.

Four alternate crossing sites were presented. "A" and "B" as in the first hearing, then B1 and C (at existing Bridge) were new proposals.

The project will consist of a new two-lane, two-way bridge with provisions for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Paved two-lane, two-way approaches will be needed, easterly to Mullan Road (FAS 263) and on the west to the Big Flat Road (County Rt. 30).

The following Department of Highways personnel attended the hearing:

Vern Bordon - District Engineer, Missoula
Howard Johnson - Supervisor Field R/W Section, Missoula
Gordon Larson, Supervisor - Consultant Design Section
Bill Stephenson, Assistant Manager - Public Hearings Unit
Dan Bartsch Manager - Public Hearing Unit, Helena

Representing the Federal Highway Administration - Jerry Eller & Bill Dunbar.

The County Surveyor, Dick Colwill gave the County report.

Morrison & Maierle personnel were:

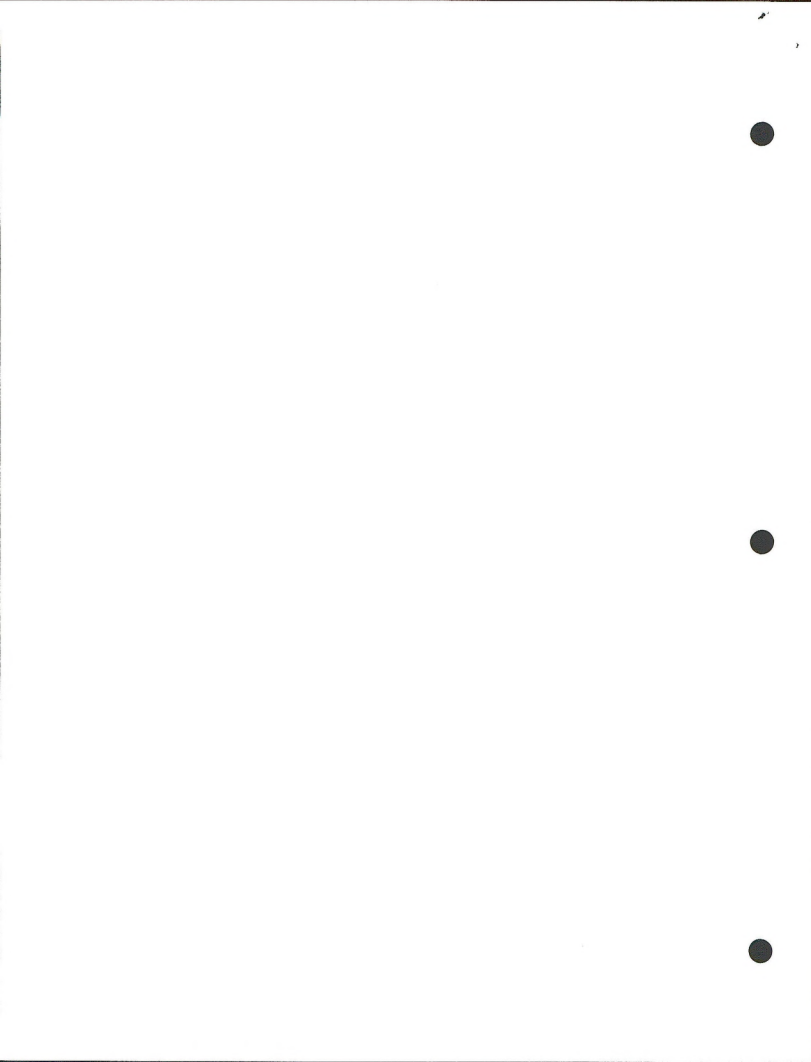
Walt Scott - Project Engineer
Brad Peterson - Designer

T R A N S C R I P T

D. BARTSCH: First of all I would like to welcome you this evening to the Public Hearing on the Harpers Bridge. It's the second hearing, as probably most all of you know. I am Dan Bartsch the manager of the Public Hearings Unit for the Highway Department, and were here to help complete all of the steps on a highway project that are necessary to comply with Federal Requirements, so that when funds are applied for and when funds are available for the job, it will qualify for federal participation for the project.

Location and design are the main subjects and of course the environmental study that has gone into it to get it to this point. First I'll introduce a few of the people here that will be either involved in the hearing now or afterwards. Most of you know Dick Colwill, Dick is a County Surveyor and he is the coordinator with the County Commissioners because it is a county project and he is primarily the contact on the project.

The county hired the engineering firm of Morrison-Maierle, and Walt Scott is here who, I guess is called, the Project Engineer and coordinated the studies that went into the Environmental Assessment that was done on the project Brad Peterson who is an engineer with them, and did most of the work of putting the papers and the words together in the final report.



D. BARTSCH:
(continued)

As I mentioned it is a Federal Aid project, there are a couple of people here from the Federal Highway Office out of Helena. The coordinator that well probably be dealing with the approval for the funds is Jerry Eller. Jerry is sitting over on this side of the room.

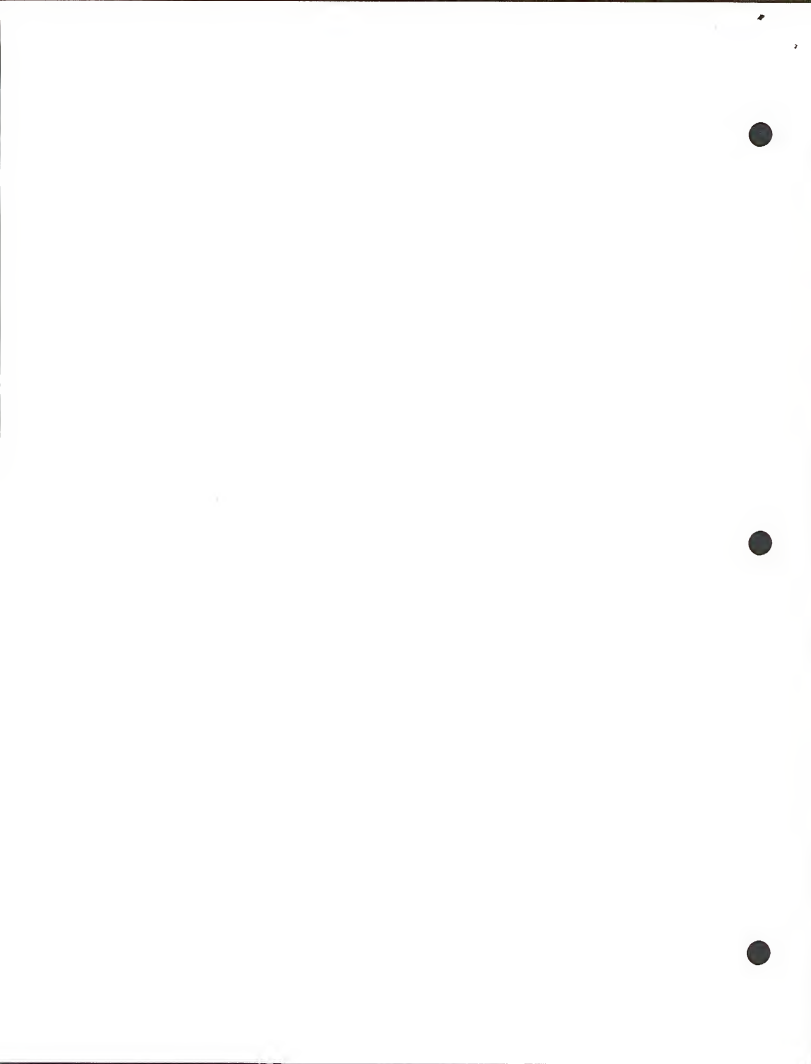
One other person that probably won't have nearly as much to do with this job as he usually does on a project, and that is our Division Engineer, Vern Borden. Vern is the head of the Highway Operation in our Missoula office. As I said, because this is a county job he won't have near as much to do with this particular job, except wanting to know how its going and keeping in touch with it. The one other person that gets involved in coordinating with the Federal Highway is Gordon Larson. Gordon is in charge of the Consultant Design Section of the Highway. Any project throughout the state that is being designed, being worked on in some way or another by a consulting firm usually has to coordinate through Gordon, so that we make sure they comply with all the regulations and requirements that we have, as far as design and that sort of thing.

So it is rather a three sided project, its a coordination problem to make sure that everything fits. Our meeting this evening will be similar to the last one. Dick will give us a little background of what some of the things they've gone through, as far as studies, and then well have Brad go over the Environmental Study, that is complete as we have it now. There will be some Right-of-Way required and we have an agreement with the County that we will actually be doing the job of purchasing the right of way, dealing with the landowners when it gets down to that point. Howard Johnson is our Right of Way Supervisor here in Missoula and we'll have him go over the basic right of way requirements, and basic right of way procedure, so that you are kind of familiar with the steps that will take place down the road. So Howard will have a few words about the right of way, and then we'll get into the question and answer and the discussion part of the meeting and get you folks involved in talking about the project. Which is really the bottom line why were here, so I guess at this time, Dick if you'll fill us in and bring us up to date.

DICK COLVILL: I will not go to deeply into the background because I think most of you know it. We've had a number of studies of where to put a replacement for Harper's Bridge, they accumulated last time in a Public Hearing similar to this, held by the Highway Department.

After this hearing the County Commissioners passed a resolution selecting the B1 site as the site desired by the County. This was forwarded to the State and to the Federal Highway people. Along with it, from you Big Flat people, came a substantial petition opposing the project. As a result of that, everything kind of came to a halt. It was felt because of the opposition, that more study was needed of the project. Neither the State nor the County was willing to spend the money for more study and it kind of lied dormant for a while. Then came a second petition that indicated that possibly there was some interest in the project again, and as a result of that second petition, the study has been redone.

Essentially the things that have been added, are a much deeper analysis of Site C. the existing bridge site and the study now talks about B1, which really wasn't in the last study. It was something that was added on as a result of the hearing. So we've got to this point and of course meanwhile the existing bridge has been closed.



D. COLVILL:
(continued)

As a result of a reanalysis in the, on going transportation programming process, we've taken another look at this, so called, Western Bypass option. This was run through, what we call our Policy Commission, which is the County Commissioners and Mayor, the Transportation Governing body of Missoula County, you might say. They have decided that the so called Western Bypass was not a foreseeable option in the next 20 or 30 years. Its something that we wouldn't see for quite a while. I am not going to stand here and tell you you may never see it. I'm just saying it doesn't look like it's within the time frame we can look at or within the time frame of our studies that it'll ever come about. So its been dropped as a concept in the ongoing transportation plan. There will be a new transportation plan incidentally, produced sometime in the next year I guess, but it won't show the Western Bypass. So, as a result of that, we have arrived at the hearing tonite to find out how you feel about the situation now based on whats transpired and based on the new information we've put together.

Incidentally, two of our County Commissioners are here to listen too. Mary Dussault in front, Barbara Evans in back, they of course will be deeply involved in the decisions that are made at the county level, Dan.

D. BARTSCH:

Okay thanks Dick, I guess there is nothing else to add except to ask Brad, from Morrison and Maierle, to briefly go through the study that they made on the Environmental Assessment and bring us up to date, Brad.

B. PETERSON:

In our Environmental Assessment there are four alternatives which have been considered and studied for the Harper's Bridge replacement project; Alternative A is shown here, it begins at the Big Flat Road near the northeast corner of Section 20, in Township 13 North, Range 20 West, extends northeast along existing property lines, crosses the river and then crosses part of the Kona Ranch, just north of the resiorvior and joins with the Mullen Road, just north of Elmar Estates and just south of the Kona Ranch entrance road. The bridge required at this site would be 570 feet long. The total project length would be 1.6 miles, including the approach roads from the Big Flat Road to the Mullen Road and the bridge.

Alternative B1, as Dick mentioned, has been added on this current Environmental Assessment. It was revised to more closely follow existing access roads. It begins at the corner of the Big Flat Road, just north of Melody Lane, continues directly east across the river following an existing private access road, crosses the river and then continues east following the Kona Ranch entrance Road to the Mullen Road. The bridge required for this alternative would be 690 feet long and the total length of the project from the Big Flat Road to the Mullen Road would be 1.4 miles, including both the roadway and the bridge.

Alternative C is the existing site. The preliminary design we show here is located just 50 feet north of the existing bridge. The project begins approximately 2 miles south of this point at the end of pavement on the Big Flat road. It continues northward along the river, on the slopes above the river and crosses the river at the existing site and connects with the existing Harper's Bridge access road, which is also paved. So the project goes from pavement to pavement. The length of bridge required at this site would be 726 feet long. The total length of project including the approach roadways, which would be reconstructed, and the bridge is 2.7 miles.

B. PETERSON:
(continued)

Now the fourth alternative, which was investigated in the Environmental Assessment, was the no action alternative. In other words the bridge would stay as it is and access would be provided by the McClay Bridge, or other accesses to the Big Flat area.

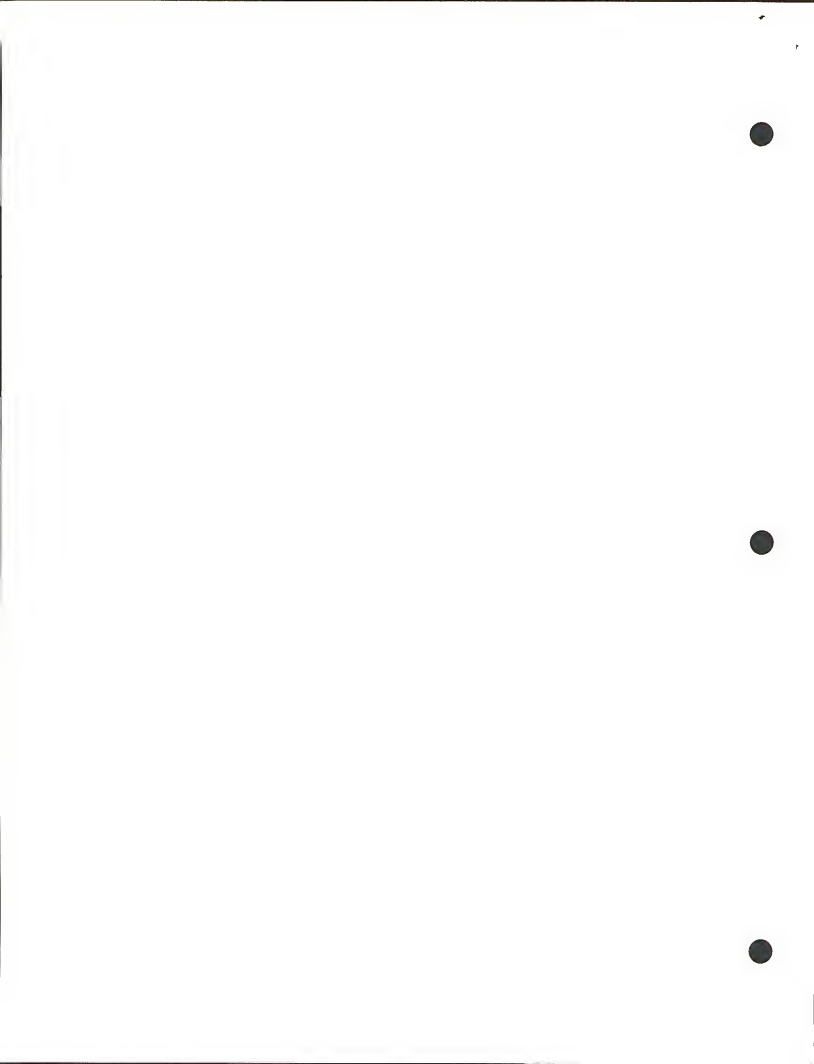
The Environmental Assessment discusses the environmental impacts of the project and I will discuss a few of those significant impacts at this time. There are no minorities or other special groups which would be affected. No schools, churches or businesses which would be directly affected by the project and therefore, the social and economic impacts will be minimal from the project. Visual impacts were also investigated. Of course any project constructed of this size will have a visual impact, probably greater for Alternatives B1 and A, because they are on new alignments. Alternative C will also have an impact because of the construction along the river. Of course at the bridge site it would have a beneficial impact improving the visual quality over the existing bridge. All designs would be in accordance with standard practices to minimize the visual effects and to make the appearance of the project as pleasing as possible.

Traffic was investigated. If Alternative A or B1 is constructed, the traffic estimated to use the bridge, if the project were constructed in 1983, is 1200 vehicles per day. Projecting ahead to the year 2003, twenty years from now, if A or B1 were constructed, the traffic is estimated to be 1500 to 2000 vehicles per day. On Alternative C, because of its location, it would be less likely to attract traffic entering the Big Flat. Some traffic would continue to use the McClay Bridge to enter the Big Flat. The traffic is, therefore, estimated at 700 vehicles per day on that bridge in the year 1983, and 900 to 1200 vehicles per day 20 years from in the year 2003.

Water quality was investigated in the report. The project should have minimal impact on water quality. One possible impact would be during construction, because of the excavation and fills that would be constructed. Alternative B1 would have the least impact because of the terrain and the minor cuts and fills required. Alternative A has a fairly large cut on the north east side of the river and would therefore have a slightly higher possibility of impact in the stream, caused by excavation and sediment eroding and being transported into the river. Alternative C would have a still higher impact, or possible impact during construction, because of the 2 mile section of the project which parallels a river and is just above the river. Of course these impacts can be mitigated by proper construction practices and erosion control.

Noise was investigated along the project based on the traffic projections, and design of the project, the grades, the horizontal alignment and other design factors. It is calculated that at a distance of 150 feet from the roadway, the noise level will be 60 decibels and that is the border of the area acceptable by the Federal Highway Administration standards and meets the following:

Unique and unusual tracts of land in which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purposes.



B. PETERSON:
(continued)

So anything within 150 feet of the project would not meet this requirement. At the present time there is one residence within about 140 feet of the project, located right here on Alternative B1, that would be effected by noise. And because of the quiet nature of the area, at this time, any increased traffic in the area would have, ofcourse, increased noise and have an effect on the area.

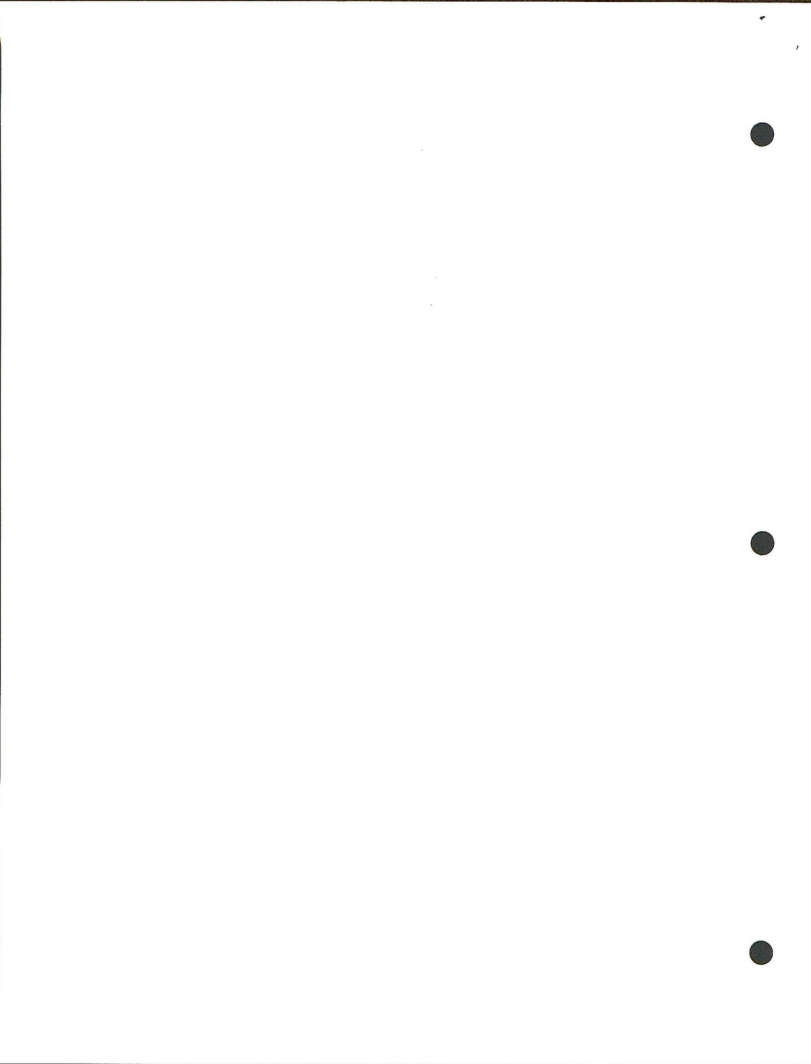
Flood hazards were investigated for the area using existing cross section data, river flow data, and the preliminary designs which we have designed. The change in the water surface elevation above the bridge and below, were estimated. For alternative A it is estimated that upstream from the bridge, the water surface elevation would raise 2 tenths of one foot, during the 100 year flood. On Alternative B, it is estimated that there would be no change in the water surface elevation caused by the bridge during the 100 year flood. At Alternative C, the bridge at the existing site would actually have a beneficial effect on the flood plain because removal of the old bridge and replacement with a new bridge would improve the flow, and therefore, lower the water surface elevation during a flood. Of course D, if there were no bridge constructed, would either have no impact, or if the bridge was removed it would have a beneficial impact because a restriction on the flow would be removed.

Land use planning and the effects that the project will have on it, were investigated. Land use designations are generally agreeable to the project with the exception of the rural low density residential designation, since it is established to provide a rural atmosphere. Construction of either Alternative A or B1, which pass through this rural low density area, may effect that. The project presents no problem to the zoning in the area. In fact, the zoning will help to control and regulate growth in the area which may be encouraged by the project. Natural resources were investigated particularly the wildlife in the area. Alternative B1 would have very little impact on wildlife. Alternative A passes through a forested area adjacent to the river and may effect whitetail deer and other animals in the area. As will Alternative C, because it passes through the 2 mile section just above the river through the forested areas.

Safety of course was considered in the Environmental Assessment. Alternatives A and B1, because of the terrain through which they pass, it was possible to design them meeting all recommended standards for safety. They are designed with a 50 mph design speed, with standard intersections at each end.

Alternative C, because of the terrain through which it passes, there are several sharp curves restricting the design speed to 30 mph and in this location there would be approximately an 8% vertical grade. Therefore, Alternative C would be the least safe of the three alternatives presented.

User costs were also investigated, again Alternative C, because of its sharper curves, which cause traffic to slow and speed up, its steeper grades, greater length and greater distance to reach the Big Flat area, would be the highest user cost. For example a person leaving Missoula, via Highway 93, traveling to the Big Flat are would have to travel 6.5 miles further, using Alternative C, than he would using alternatives A or B1.



B. PETERSON:
(continued)

Agriculture and irrigation were investigated. Alternative C and B1 will effect agricultural and irrigation only slightly. The only areas which would be effected would be the actual right of way purchased for the project. Those areas would be taken out of production of course. Alternative A, as I mentioned before, crosses through a section of the Kona Ranch, a field of approximately 75 acres. This would bisect the field making two smaller, odd shaped parcels and would also bisect the existing sprinkler irrigation system making the field less desirable for farming, and of course making irrigation systems inoperable, at the same time encouraging development for other uses.

We have preliminary designs for each of the three alternatives and have at the same time estimated the construction costs. In fact the numbers I will give you are the total project costs including actual construction, administration and engineering and purchase of right of way. The costs include both the cost for the roadway, the approach roadways and the bridge. The estimated total cost for Alternative A is \$3,130,000.00. Alternative B1, the least expensive of the three alternatives, is estimated to cost \$2,731,000.00. Alternative C, the most expensive of the three alternatives, because of the longer bridge length required and the longer approach roadway required, would cost \$4,228,000.00. Thank you.

D. BARTSCH:

Okay Brad thank you. Howard do you want to go over the right-of-way for us just a bit and basically the county would have to follow these regulations in purchasing right-of-way so that they qualify for Federal participation.

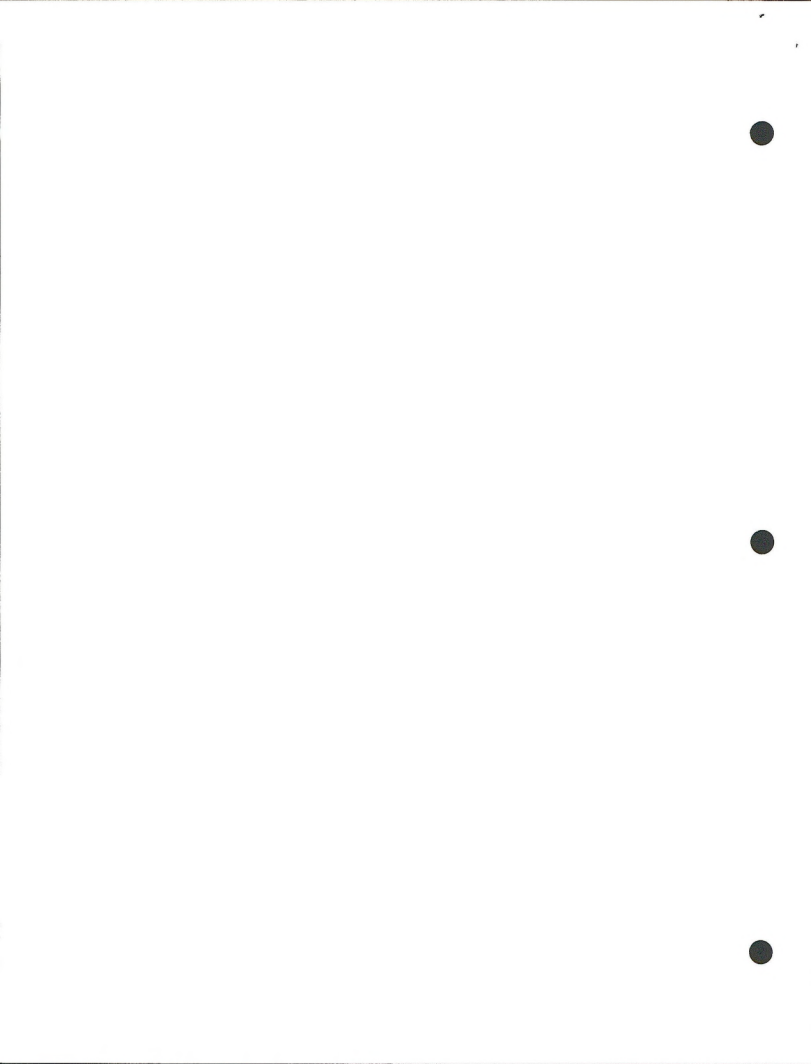
H. JOHNSON:

Good evening, I guess I won't be involved in right-of-way on this project, however there will some right of way needed which Missoula County will be acquiring. I am Howard Johnson the District Right-of-Way supervisor for the Department of Highways. Because of the federal funding participation, the county will have to follow the federal uniform acquisition act and that essentially means, the right of way needed will have to be appraised for the current fair market value and the full value of the appraisal will have to be offered to the land owners. When you came in tonight you were given a brochure, "Your Properties and Your Highways", and this I think, outlines the right of way procedure better than I can.

This project won't cause any displacement of families, farms or businesses however, the Department of Highways does have a relocation assistance program. This program provides supplemental housing payments, moving costs, incidental expense, advisory assistance and other services to anyone displaced by the highway construction. Any payments made under the relocation program are in addition to the fair compensation paid for the right of way acquired. Back at the table there is a brochure on relocation assistance and if any of you are interested you can pick one up after the hearing. I believe that's about all I have Dan.

D. BARTSCH:

Okay Howard thank you. On that relocation, if something were to transpire that the design involved some relocation, they would have to comply with those regulations. So they are available, and it would be in force. Okay that basically gives you a little outline of where we are at this point.



D. BARTSCH:
(continued)

As we did before, we are recording all the comments and questions, both for your record and for ours, so that we can review and summarize the comments and pass them on to the people who will be making final decisions and so forth. Because of that, I would like to ask you to make sure you have one of the mics when you are recognized to make your comment or statement or your question or whatever you have in mind. We didn't go over a lot of the details. As Brad illuded to, there is a kind of a basic design that they were using to apply to the various alternates. Most of those aren't really nailed down, so we can't answer questions specifically of how many feet exactly that will be here or there. That won't be ironed out until the final design and they do get there final plans worked out, but we will try to address as many of the questions we can, or explain the background of what we know at this point. Any statements or comments you have that we can't answer, well certainly be taken them into the record and will be considered as the project progresses and decisions are being made.

I guess thats only the basic ground rules that I have at this time. We'll start now by opening it up to anyone who has statements or comments supporting the project opposing it or whatever. Does anybody has any prepared statement they would like enter into the record? I would say at this time we have received a few letters already that will be entered into the record in the same manner as the statements here tonight. We will also entertain any statements that you would wish to write and send in later on. We'll have a deadline for receiving written comments that we will include, so if you just want to get some information straight and then write your final, more or less statement or comment later, you can do it that way if you wish. So, would anybody like to get it started, ask any questions or outline a few of the basic things that got the project where its at now? This lady right here sure, get us started here please.

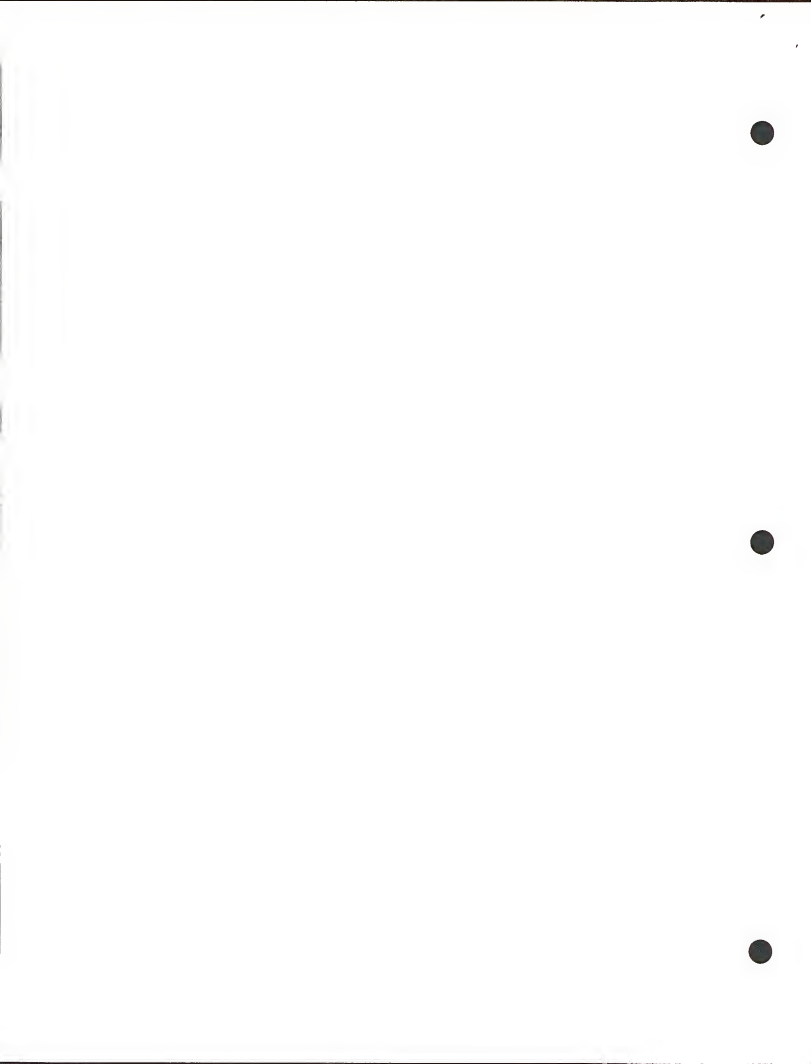
P. HAAGLUND: My name is Peggy Haaglund and my husband and I own property where Project B1 goes through. We accept the project now, its been years coming. I have one question, I see your outline up there, as far as where the bridge will go evidently, and I wonder, do they realize that what it shows right there, is crossing the hundred year flood plain. Do you know what I mean?

D. BARTSCH: Yes. Okay, I have to ask Brad to get back up maybe and clarify the flood plain. We do know the 100 year flood limits, they are marked in here, you can't see them from back there if you haven't looked close. Brad would you want to address the flood plain study that you did. Particularly for alternate B1, you are primarily concerned with, right?

B PETTERSON: Dan, I'd like to introduce Phil Porrini who is with our firm and he did the flood plain work and ask him if he would address that question.

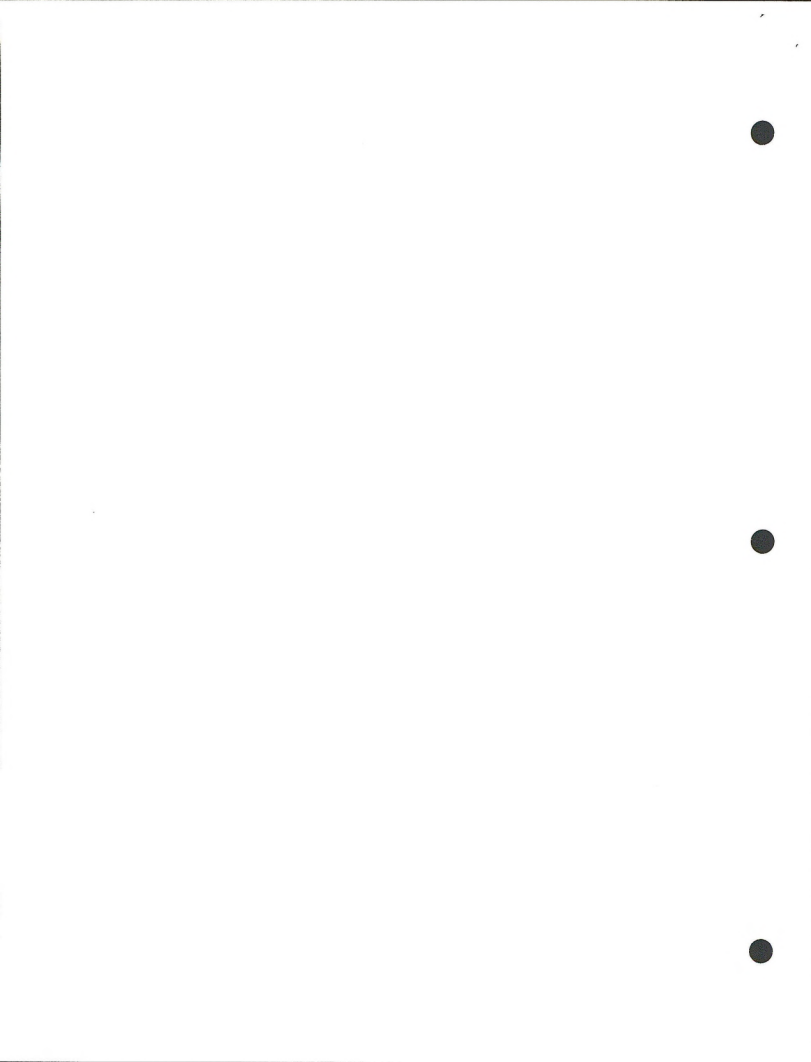
D. BARTSCH: Okay, we'll get the expert, right from the horses mouth. Phil.

P. PORRINI: We did evaluate the flood hazards and the hydraulics, lets say, at each of the bridge crossings and in particular at B1. We used some existing cross sectional information that was available from the flood insurance study that Missoula County has available to them right now. The effects of putting a bridge in at the B1 site were rather small and as Brad

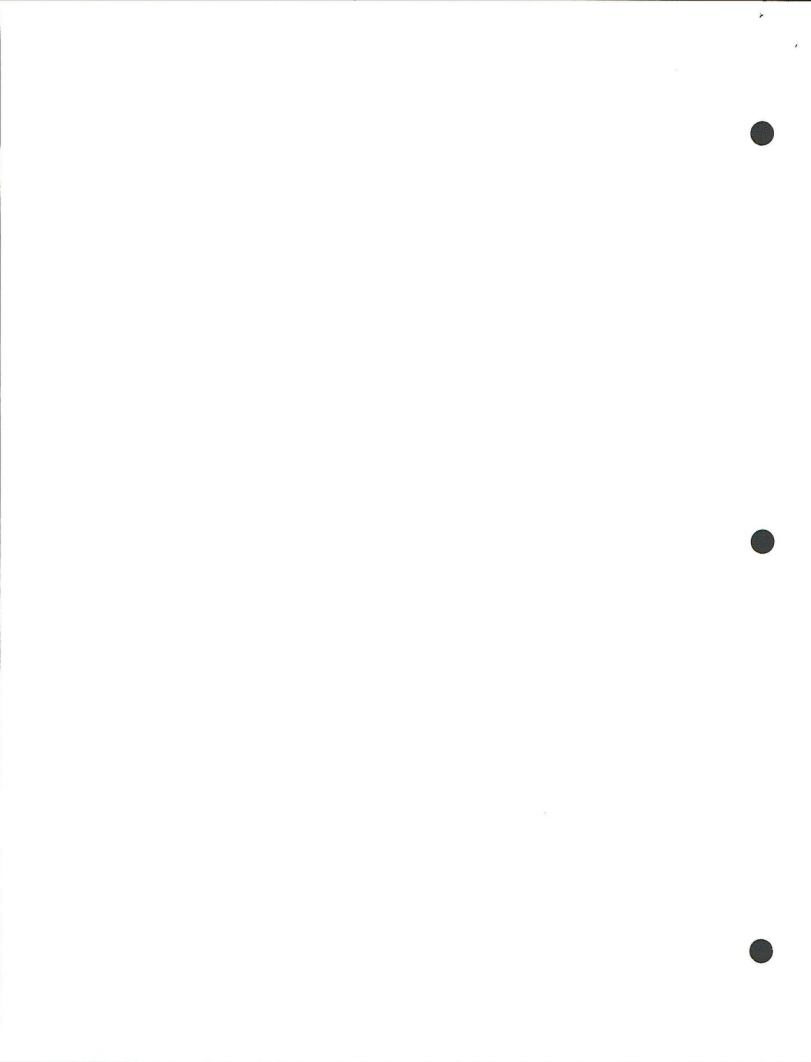


mentioned, they would have no effect on back water during a 100 year flood. The preliminary design of the bridge is such that it offers very little resistance to flood flows and it would have a minimum of 2 foot of clearance above the 100 flood elevation.

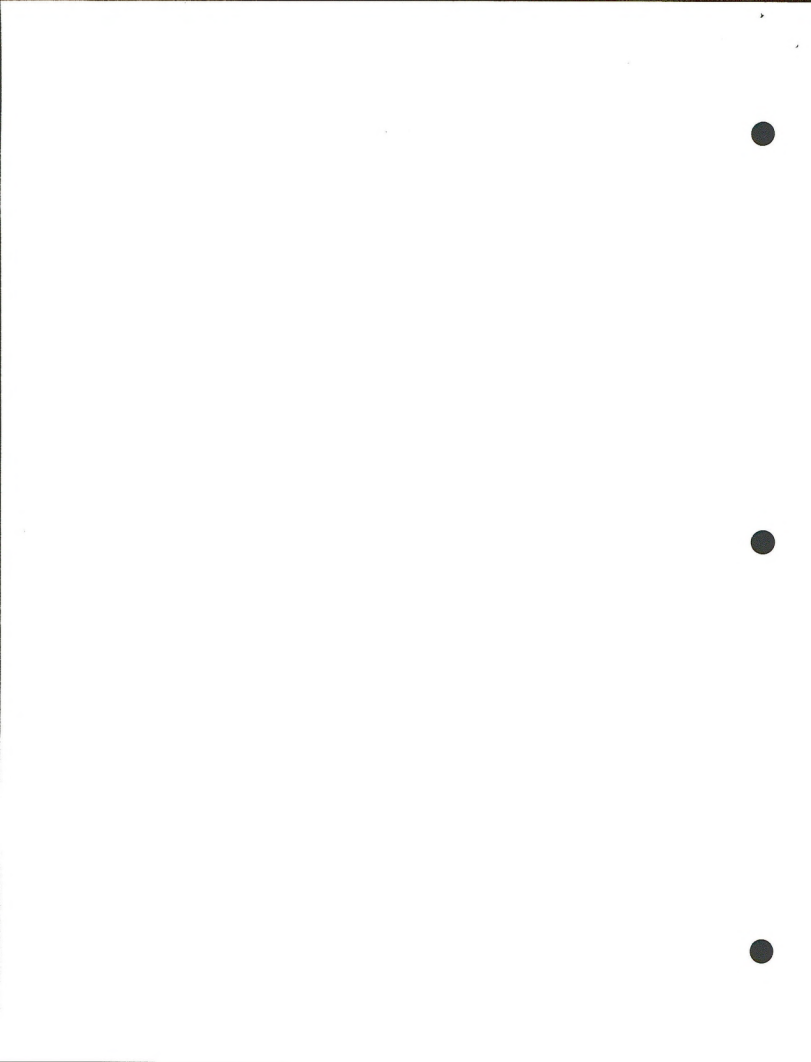
- P. HAAGLUND: Are you starting back from where that shows the bridge is?
- P. PORRINI: No, in terms of the hydraulic analysis that we performed, we went down stream of the bridge location and back watered our analysis up through the bridge crossing and up stream probably beyond where that photo shows the description of the site.
- P. HAAGLUND: I've seen water run through that area right on the left side of what shows the bridge.
- D. BARTSCH: What I hear your saying is maybe different from what he say. Let me try to clarify. What your asking is the actual bridge structure, the opening under the bridge, is it going to be wider than this white area, or stripe that is showing on the display? And I think the answer is no, that is the basic opening of the structure, so that the approaches beyond that white area on either side, will be fill, will be part of the road approaches. Now that's maybe the answer to your question.
- P. HAAGLUND: Well that is my answer and now I'll say why? I've lived out there seven-teen years I've owned the land 21 years and I have seen water run through there well just about. It is not unusual for the water to run through that low area. It really isn't.
- D. BARTSCH: I think that Phil is saying that they know that, that they recognize that.
- P. PORRINI: We recognize that in the low area that your talking about, off the left bank, does not carry a significant amount of flow as compared to the total flow that would passed underneath the bridge.
- P. HAAGLUND: Well I agree with that but, then I also see places on rivers that you obstruct with something like this and then am I eventually going to end up with a piece of land that looks like something that's at Reserve Street bridge. That's what I dont want. I guess that's why we have fought this thing so desperately I know our County Commissioners see it, the conservation district works with it constantly, that is the obstruction of a floodway and then what is done to land around that either across the river or down the river or whatever and I sure don't want to loose my little old 10 acres.
- D. BARTSCH: I guess what Phil's saying is, they feel they have calculated for flow of water and if they build a bridge big enough to handle and force that water through, then you shouldn't see a repeat of those other situations. Maybe that's the reason those situations came about, which the're aware of.
- P. HAAGLUND: I will stand on the record, that I feel you are wrong. I lost 30 feet to that river in about 2 days once so I don't trust it at all.



- P. PORRINI: Id agree with you that the river is very dynamic and anything that's done on its banks has got to be handled very carefully. I might add though that at each of the alternatives, we investigated a number of different bridge spans and we tried to come up with an optimum bridge span which would be, let's say, the most economical and still pass the 100 year flow without causing a significant amount of back water. We encroached further on that particular site and found that for every additional encroachment that was made there was a noticeable increase in back water. So we selected that bridge length as being the most appropriate for the information from which we were working.
- P. HAAGLUND: Do you protect areas around the bridge?
- P. PORRINI: Certainly at the bridge abutments, they would be rip rapped, they would be side sloped at approximately 2 to 1.
- P. HAAGLUND: Now let me ask another question? These are all very personnel, you know we've lived a very calm life out there all these years; are we going to end up with another McClays or Harpers bridge, where the people roam all over your land all the time and there seems to be no way we or other people can keep them off. Are we faced with the same problem? It throws me into a panic. I suppose that's something no one can guaranty. I think this will be on both sides of the bridge and either location.
- D. BARTSCH: Dick, maybe you can address this. On normal highway projects where we're totally involved in the purchase of right of way and the design of the approaches and everything, one of the things that we commit to is building and retaining enclosures by building fences where it is necessary. Do you know if you've gotten far enough along to commit to or know whether you're going providing fencing along the right of way? What I'm thinking of is if that's a possibility at least fencing come up to bridge ends would create a physical barrier and outline the property line. I guess if the people climb over the fences and break them down then its an enforcement problem that gets beyond us.
- P. HAAGLUND: I know one area they probably will, I suppose its physically able to keep people off of them I dont know?
- D. COLVILL: I guess one of the things, as you speak tonight you should expres the desire not to have a public access at the river if that's what you want.
- P. HAAGLUND: I wouldn't see where anyone would want them on any of the locations except Harper's and I think that maybe will.
- D. COLVILL: I'd think we'd certainly have to fence the road clear because its primarily agricultural land of one kind or another. So yes, as we buy the right of way and build a road, we'll have to provide a fence. If the predominant opinion is, you want no access to the river at that point, as Dan said, we can bring the fence up to the guardrails or what ever structure is on the bridge but we can't guarantee that nobody well climb over the rails. We just won't provide them a place to park their car.



- D. BARTSCH: I guess that's as close as I could think to try to address that, as far as looking at features in the detailed design. It was a good point to bring out and make sure it's in the record.
- J. STURGIS: I own the house that is impacted the most by B1. I guess my question is probably the same as a lot of questions that are going to be asked tonight. We all have been through this before, is there an estimated time of arrival for this bridge, if it is approved, if it is, when?
- D. BARTSCH: We very well knew this was going to come up. One of the big things that makes this question very difficult to answer is the fact that we don't know just when and if there will be money to build it. Right now we think there will be, some time in the foreseeable future. The county is working on the premise that there should be bridge replacement funds to build the structure. Bridge replacement funds are very heavily controlled by the federal monies released to the states. Right now the state programs for spending bridge money is pretty well locked in and committed for the next two years. Beyond that its more open as far as we know. We have some jobs that have ready dates out beyond 2 years, but we're not real solid on those projects until they're completed as far as the design and buying right of way, etc.
- This job kind of falls in that same catagory. The county would like to proceed with the job, make the final decisions and hopefully get a complete enough agreement to be able to say yes, this is the site, whatever site that is, than begin to work towards getting it ready to be let. If they can get those decisions made, then the application through the state highway department for the funds will be processed and we'll be able to look for funds for bridge replacement beyond the next 2 fiscal years.
- Dick mentioned today that, if they can get the plans ready within a reasonable period of time, whatever that is, it includes getting final authorization, getting the approval of the environmental study and the design and those things, they will begin the process of purchasing right of way. They anticipated a 4 year bracket would be needed to complete that. Is that about right Dick?
- D. COLVILL: Well hopefully it isn't going to take 4 years to buy the right of way but, we don't want to start spending county money buying right of way of course until we are reasonably sure that federal funds are available for the bridge so its kind of a chicken and egg thing. Once we get some kind of assurance and I realize a positive assurance well just get the project put on a program, then we will start to buy the right of way. But buying right of way is a tedious process at best and I would estimate it would take us at least a year probably 2 years to go through the process unless everybody is real easy to deal with and that usually never happens.
- D. BARTSCH: So you see it's optimum, if we got all the approvals within the next several months, the county again reassured us that, yes this is the site they want, we can go ahead with the design and they can go ahead with their design, their road plan designs and stuff.



- J. STURGIS: In the 5 year plan for Missoula County, I think its a 5 year plan, did you not earmark a certain amount of money to buy right of way, and isn't it the number 1 priority to buy the right of way for the Harper's Bridge relocation project, and will those funds stay number 1 priority until such time as the federal government frees up the money to build the bridge?
- D. COLVILL: Well in the current budget, there is what probably amounts to a token amount of money, I think its \$50,000 or \$25,000 for buying right of way, we haven't spent a penny of it and won't this year. I guess what is going to happen next year is a decision the commissioners are going to have to make. There going to have to commit themselves, if it's their priority to spend a considerable amount of money. You look at any of these estimates, the cheapest one even is \$700,000 or \$800,000 of county money going into this job. They'll have to look at their capital improvement program, as it comes, for the next five years and their going to refine it and say, yeah we want to put this money on Harper's Bridge or no we don't. They have that option too, I can't answer for the commissioners and I'm sure they can't even answer for themselves because they haven't looked at the total program yet. But they will look at it as we go through this capital improvement program between now and the 1st of July.
- J. STURGIS: Okay I would like to support Peggy Haaglund in saying that anything that can be done to restrict access to the river at that site would be a great benefit to all of us. Particularly on B1 alternative.
- D. BARTSCH: Okay thank you and Im sorry, I guess we can't give you any dates or time of 4 years or 5 years, it just is still pretty shakey.
- D. THOMPSON: Darrell Thompson from Albert Creek Ranch, the lone wolf on the other direction of Harper's Bridge, 7 miles up the river, called the south side road. About seven miles up there is the LDS Church Ranch which I'm the manager. I also have a family up there that goes to school, 2 boys . . .
TAPE ENDED .

It requires additional equipment even to get accross the bridge or else drive 35 miles around even to get to town. Along with that we have a number of people who are city type people who use that particular area for recreational and church camps, boy scouts, what have you in that area. Also, on the other side of the bridge at Bill Kinney's place which is down along the Harper's Bridge Road at that real sharp bend that they're talking about, we also lease that place and farm it as hay ground. At the present time it would become impossible to go anywhere with anything because we have no access across the river. B1 doesn't give us any access across the river unless we still go up over the county road clear up over the top back several miles and then back across all the area and back along Mullen Road until we back to Harper's Bridge Road.

In that area, as far as recreation at Harper's Bridge, currently it is used for a little bit of everything. The access, even though they've closed it (the bridge) you still leave it open for motor vehicles as far as motor bikes, snowmobiles, horses, cows, and children but no motor vehicles. One of the ideas I had that when it was closed it was unsafe.

D. THOMPSON: Since it was unsafe, we went and spent I don't know how many thousands of dollars replanking it, putting sides on it, fixing it up. I'm wondering why, if the bridge is actually unsafe, why are we spending money to keep it in some kind of a working order?

Another thing I was wondering about on the cost of the bridge, there is going to be more impact on Harper's Bridge since the Fish and Game is planning on putting some more recreational areas there, a bow area, rifle range and dock for boats. If that's the case, then the people upstream are still going to have all that nice traffic coming around and impacting there properties and coming back over that same road that is going to have to be rebuilt anyway. So what I'm wondering is, where do we come up with so much more costs, other than bridge span, of going across Harper's Bridge Road compared to the other alternatives? Even if we do build on B1, doesn't that road still have to be rebuilt so it's safe for the current traffic or more traffic if the Fish and Game continues with their program? Then I have a couple more questions.

D. BARTSCH: Let me back up just a little bit, I wanted to make sure I identified the fact that you presently come up on the west side of the river and past Harper's Bridge and then on this road that is on the west side of the river parallel to the river, going north about 7 miles.

D. THOMPSON: Roughly if you call it north, yes.

D. BARTSCH: And then the other property that you refer to is across the river to the east side of the river? I wanted to make sure I identified where about that was at.

D. THOMPSON: Well if you go down Harper's Bridge Road until you come to the sharp corner. . .

D. BARTSCH: Okay you're talking about on the east side here, going back on what we labeled as Mullan Road?

D THOMPSON: Okay its Harper's Bridge Road until it gets to Mullen Road.

D. BARTSCH: Okay that's where I guess I was confused, when you said Harper's Bridge Road I didn't know the direction. Okay, this is actually Harper's Bridge Road coming back along the east side.

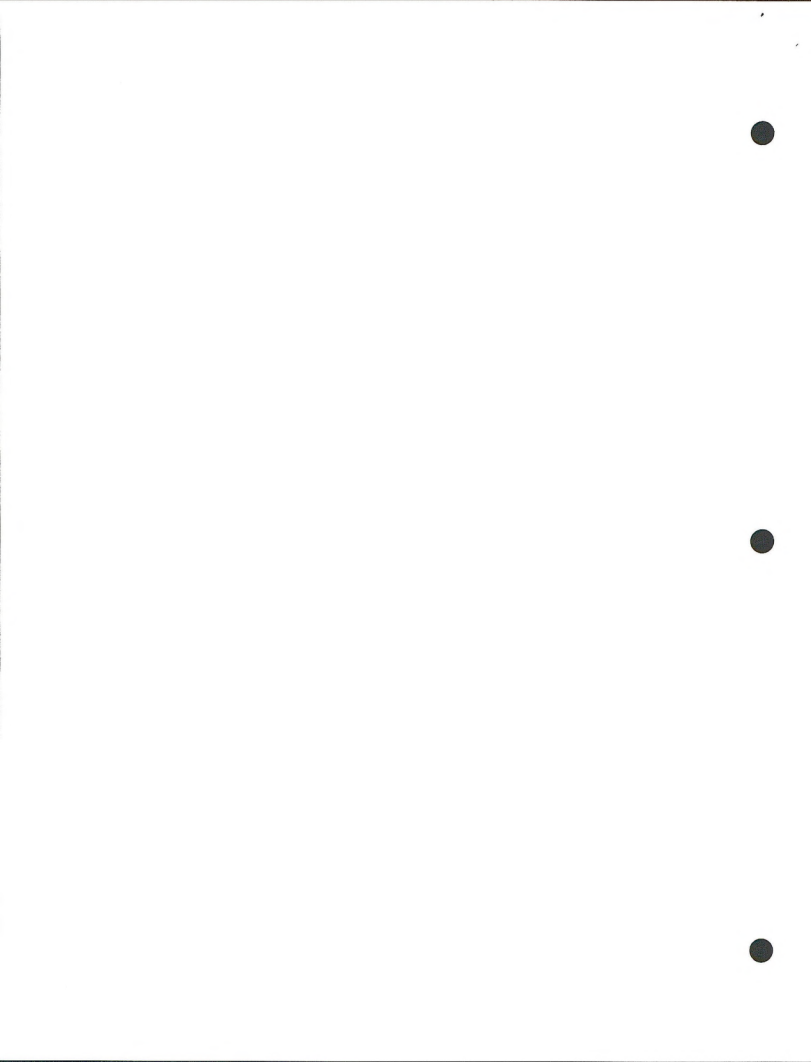
D. THOMPSON: Yes we have that section of ground in there which is leased on a ten year lease, which is almost nullifies by no access to it now.

D. BARTSCH: That's what, about 1 mile 2 miles how far back from the Bridge.

D THOMPSON: Well to the nearest corner it's about a mile from the bridge.

D. BARTSCH: Okay I wanted to make sure I got that. Now Dick I'll ask you if you would address his basic question, why the much higher cost estimate on replacing the Harper's Bridge at its present location?

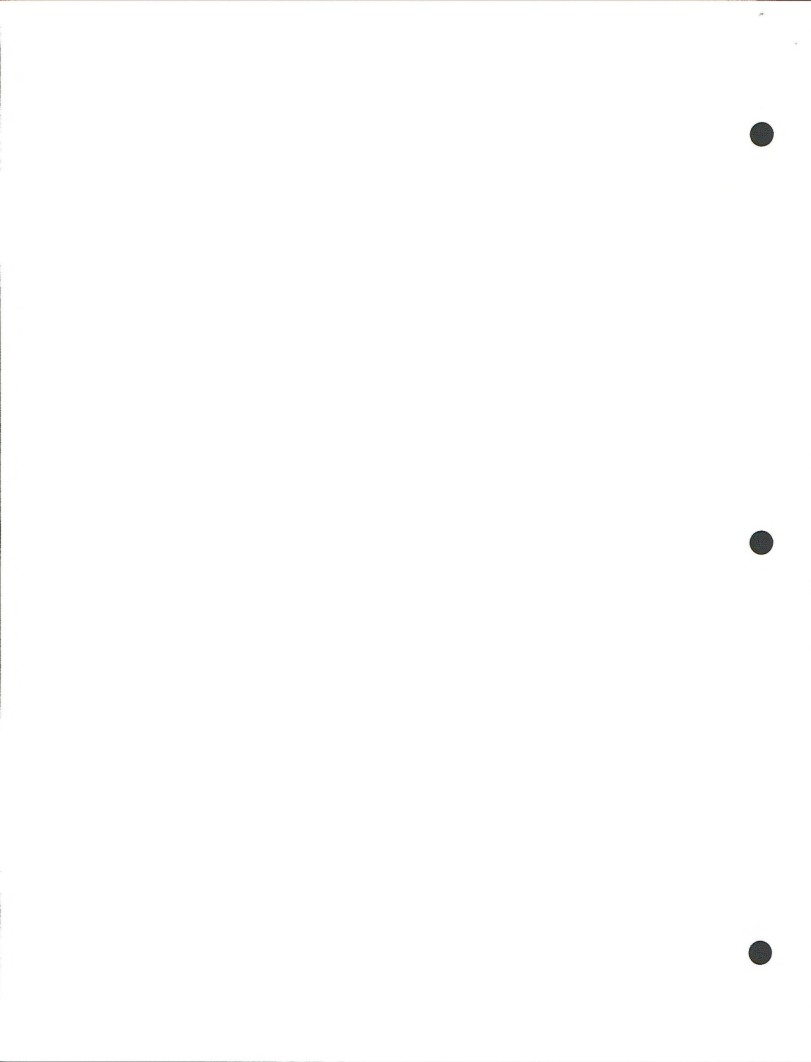
D. THOMPSON: Yes and does not that road have to be reconstructed anyway.



- D. BARTSCH: Okay then if we built the bridge, if you guys built the bridge on B1, wouldn't this piece of road have to be improved up here or why not if not?
- D. COLVILL: What you mentioned with the Fish and Game of course is a very new thing and to my knowledge they never had any public hearings on it, so I can't quite measure that impact. Its true, if they build some kind of a large facility there, its going to attract traffic over that road and it will probably have to be improved. As things are now, I don't know whether the traffic is greater or less over that road than it was before the bridge closed. We just haven't taken any counts, I would guess that it is probably a little less or about the same. So I don't see any big impact coming unless that Fish and Game thing goes in, nothing different than it is now. Now it isn't very good I admit that, it's a dangerous road.
- D. BARTSCH: As far as you can see Dick, there would be no demand, at least as far as you can see, to improve this if the new bridge were located at B1? You'd leave this section up here at the end, that comes up to the old Harper's Bridge site, you'd leave it as it is and just maintain it on the basis the county maintains it now and so forth, is that right?
- D. COLVILL: There is no question, even if the bridge gets put at B or A, it's desirable to improve that road. I can't tell you how it's going to fit into the funding program, that's all. I don't see it fitting into the funding program in the next 5 years.
- D. THOMPSON: But everybody that lives on this side of the bridge and has to go up over that hill then, there still wouldn't be any advantage at all of having the bridge in the newer location, is that right. Because we would still have the same road to travel.
- D. COLVILL: Where you live obviously, anybody who lives close to the existing bridge of course is going to benefit much more by having it put back where it is. That would be your prime site, I can't argue that at all.
- D. BARTSCH: I guess the only thing I could imagine that would be a benefit is, once you did get to the B1 site which would be the next closest site, you could cross to the Mullen Road if you were going on into town. You can get on that road but you'd still be faced with the same piece of road from the old Harper's Bridge up over the hill for the time being.
- D. THOMPSON: Evidently they're not aware of Fish and Game purchasing that land presently owned by the Champion International. All that top hill where the county road comes through, is currently owned by Champion and being transferred to Fish and Game through the Forest Service.
- D. COLVILL: I knew they were considering it, I did not know they'd purchased it, no.
- D. THOMPSON: Would it not put an impact, if they go ahead and build that facility in there first then wouldn't it almost make it impossible to ever consider building a bridge back there once the Fish and Game put in that type of facility? Would it not eliminate that site completely then, if you're looking at 5 years before you decide?

- D. COLVILL: Yeah I'm not sure I could totally answer that. I would suspect that, before the Fish and Game builds it, they would have some kind of public hearing to analyze the impacts of it and at that time there would be some discussion on the extra traffic generated by it and its impact on the road and what could be done to ease these. That's kind of a separate subject that I guess is going to come up some time in the future.
- D. THOMPSON: I just wanted to make sure that people knew what kind of traffic that road is capable of handling. Of course on the increase in numbers, I'm not sure where they come up with the increase numbers crossing the bridge but just in the recreational value of the land above and what we use it for, the amount of traffic will increase that B1 alternative by quite a bit. On any given weekend we might run 40 or 50 vehicles up that particular road ourselves hunting and all that type of thing. I don't think anyone had really took a survey when the traffic is heavy on those roads. Most of the traffic count was made right after hunting season or just before, during, that's your heavy time of course, which gives you some idea of the impact that you'll have in that area. I have other questions on that but I won't take any more time.
- D. BARTSCH: Okay, so your basic message is, you would prefer the bridge replaced there at alternate C.
- D. THOMPSON: Well what it does instead of creating an area down there where you can develop property and cause you more problems than you've got now, you talked about whether people would stay on that road. They'll stay on that road just as well as they stay on the road there by Harper's Bridge. The beer parties and the playing around and stuff, it's always been that kind of an area and it always will be. The only difference now is, they'll come through this area to come over there. Probably stop along the way, there are signs up all over there, for instance, No Shooting, No Trespassing, etc. There is no way you can control it, you can't expect the sheriff's department to spend 24 hours a day on a road, hoping that people are going to stop. The fishing, everytime you open up an area, they're going to fish in it and there going to have people on the bridge, under the bridge, across the bridge. Unless these same people are going to just quit or come down here and not go across there, but I think it will be the same people. So your still going to have people scattered over all that countryside. If they don't, god bless you American people, because there different than the ones I know.

Also, one other thing I will bring up is, up in that area from Harper's on, is a heavily used area for recreation. I don't know what's up in there that attracts people, but it does. We have a tremendous amount of people. There isn't a day goes by that there isn't 10 or 15 vehicles up along those roads. If anybody would doubt that, all they have to do is come up there some morning and sit and start counting. For safety reasons for instance, try to get a forest fire vehicle up in there, a rescue unit or anything in that category, they've got to drive clear out to the south end of Missoula come out southside Road come clear back over the big Flat Road, which is not safe, come clear back over the road that supposedly not safe and then eventually going another 7 miles up into that recreational area in order to get some kind of a unit up in there. To me, it's a bit ridiculous and we spend money for something we've already got.



D. BARTSCH: Okay thank you for that input. I guess Dick can work on that when he reviews the transcript. There's somebody down here: I've been looking over that way quite a bit.

L. BARNES: I guess I've been fighting with Dick Colville so long I hate to see us agree on the same thing. The alternate B1, I am for it, I'd like to see us get on with it, whenever there's money or time or what ever is available, let's use it. We might even name that bridge something else besides Harper's Bridge, cause that name's been kind of sore spot with everybody on that side of the river for a long time. I'm sure Dick, he might have been sour over that name once in awhile. So let's just get on with it and I'll agree with you for once Dick.

D. BARTSCH: Thanks alot. That helps get things going too, seeing people express their support of the project.

UNIDENTIFIED: Well I have selfish interests as well. I'm with the gentlemen down there, I live in his direction. There is not many of us that live on past the pavement on Big Flat I realize, but alternate A, you might as well widen McClay's Bridge, your getting so doggone close and B's not an awful lot better. The next bridge down stream is in Alberton, I would think they'd want to stretch the bridges out a little bit instead of crowding them together as much as they can. Like I say, I'm being selfish, I use to go see my grandkids in French Town, it was 12 miles now its 62 miles. And that kind of rubs a guy the wrong way.

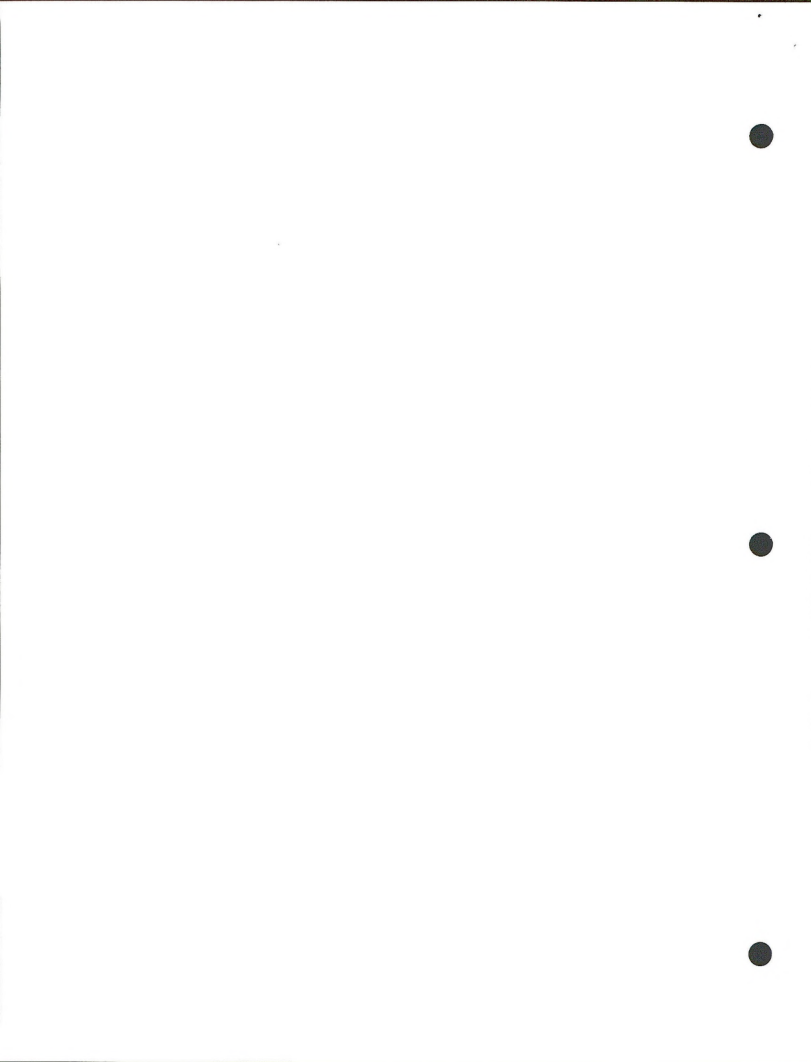
The long approach road will have to widen and improve, now we've got a 35 mph road and your going to put a 50 mph road in at these other 2 bridge sites and still you only got a 35mph road. You'll put more traffic on the road and it isn't built to handle more traffic then its taking right now. I would just as soon see them nail enough boards to get Harper's back going again and have something for the people to use. I don't think it was abused, and I'm sure it's goin to be standing there, if its left alone, for a long time yet. I think that would be a lot more practical in the long run. Maybe it will cost a little more money, it's a long ridge. I just cant for the life of me understand why you have to crowd the bridges all together instead of streatching them out where they'll do people more good.

If I'm going to the south side of Missoula I can go in on the Big Flat Road and that's fine but if Im going north to Frenchtown or if Im going up to Flathead, it puts a hell a lot of more miles. I think everybody living out there will have to agree with that.

D. BARTSCH: Okay that would be support for replacing the bridge at the present site, at C, I believe we call it.

T. CHARLES: My name is Tom Charles and I live at 1100 Valley Wind Lane and Im in support of site B1. Something that hasn't been explored here yet is the fire hazards out in our area. We do not have any fire coverage at the present time. I talked to Mr. Les Johnson, he's with the rural fire Department and they situated the fire station on Mullen Road to access Big Flag also. Our fire coverage right now costs around \$690.00 a year. We're in class 10 which means it burns to the ground. It is cut in half if that bridge goes in. Another thing is that the biggest population in that area lives from the pavement towards Missoula area which, site B1 sets right in the middle of for access.

- D. BARTSCH: Okay thank you, now this gentlemen.
- R. MUNRO: I'm Doctor Roger Munro, I live out on Big Flag Road. Maybe I missed it but what is considered to be the purpose of the bridge that's down stream from McClays Bridge? I mean what do you think of, as the purpose of this bridge? Is the purpose of this bridge to allow access out of the lower end of the Big Flat, is the purpose of this bridge to serve as a truck short cut? What purpose is a bridge down here suppose to serve? Or have we ever considered that?
- D. COLVILL: Why are we here even talking about a bridge? We're here talking about a bridge basically as a replacement for the existing structure.
- R. MONROE: Well it seems to me that if you're going to have a 5th leg on a table you ought to think about why do you need a fifth leg on a table. If the purpose of the bridge is to take the people out of the lower end of Big Flat accross into town or French Town, then obviously B1 is a lousy alternative. If the purpose is to give people access to the upper end of the Big Flat then youve already got McClay's Bridge so alternative A is a lousy choice. If the purpose is to some how get traffic in and out of the middle of Big Flat then B1 kind of makes sense but probably doesn't really save anybody any driving so what's the use of the bridge to be? Does that question make any sense to you?
- D. COLVILL: Well yeah, alternate D is do nothing, that is certainly an alternate.
- R. MUNRO: Yeah but it seems to me your sort of approaching it wrong. You ought to say, well why does this bridge exist. To me it exists to provide access for the people in the down stream, in Big Flat, into to town and back. And to serve recreational traffic to the Harper's Bridge area.
- D. COLVILL: We did, in about 1976 or '77, what we called an Origin and Destination Study, we stopped everybody that went accross Harper's Bridge for 2 days and asked them where they were going and where they came from. Supprisingly enough 60 or 70% of those people crossing the bridge were going to town. This startled us, but that's the only study of that type that weve done.
- R. MUNRO: From where?
- D. COLVILL: From where ever they were coming from, going accross the bridge toward Mullan Road. They were on there way into town, the predominant number of them.
- R. MUNRO: It seems to me your missing the point of building a bridge, that is to serve the convenience of the people of the area and it seems to me that C obviously serves that better than either of the other alternatives.
- D. COLVILL: Well that's what were here for is to get your opinion.
- R. MUNRO: You got it.
- D. BARTSCH: Very good, that's support for alternate C.



- K. STURGIS: My name is Kathy Strugis, I just have a question. Is the cost estimate of B1 or B there in the middle, does that include, how much it costs to get the property from all the owners along side the right of way, and if it doesn't and then that is included, how does that compare with the cost of C with the rights of way being obtained?
- D. BARTSCH: I think when Brad reported the figures that he gave you, he said they included the estimated cost of right of way, as well as construction, engineering, the whole ball of wax for each site. Now the other part of your question was did you want to break out the cost of right of way to B as opposed to the cost of right of way to C.
- K. STURGIS: No, I guess I just didn't hear that part. I just wondered if that didn't include R/W. I wondered if, after the rights of way were obtained, it would up the price of how much that bridge would cost. I'm just wondering how much difference there really is between the cost of building at B1 and building at C.
- D. BARTSCH: Okay, I think the figures he gave you at each site did include all elements on all sides.
- D. COLVILL: I might mention Dan, to get these right of way figures we hired a private appraiser who came in on site A and site B and came up with these figures, they happen to be \$104,000 on B1, \$143,000 on A. These two appraisals were done by a private appraiser about 2 years ago. Site C now, since most of it didn't go through private land but went through public land, was done by the Morrison and Maierle people I guess. It came out to \$70,000. The impact of right of way on C, because there is public land and so much land where we have right of way already, wasn't near as great as the other two. That's how we came up with the figure on B1, we had an appraiser go out there and it also included impacts for noise and these kinds of things.
- J. WASHBURN: My name is John Washburn, and I've been living out there about 16 years or so, using the old Harper's Bridge to and from town; to and from work. If your not going to rebuild there (alternate C), B1 is my choice, that is where I would want to see it if you're not going to rebuild in the other one. One of the reasons is it will put money in my pocket if the bridge is built there. It's less mileage to work, its less mileage to town, its less wear and tear on my vehicle. Because of the lesser amount of mileage I'll be driving, my car insurance rates will be cheaper. We would also have fire protection with that crossing at B1, where we don't have any right now. So I want to say I fully support B1.
- D. BARTSCH: Okay, fine with some good reasons.
- D. MORRIS: I think Dick and I know who each other are pretty well by now. I believe that the county commissioners in past and present, have put a lot of effort into researching this project. I believe they've made a good choice. As far as Im concerned they couldn't have made a better one, I think B would be a little better for me because that would put me closer to Deschamps Lane, but I'll suffer. I work at the Y. Mr. Munro has a problem with who's going save. It will probably cut my driving mileage to and from work, to about 40% of what it is now. He wondered what a bridge

was for, well I haven't been able to teach my car and pickup how to swim, and I'm too old and fat to run that far and swim the river, and it would get cold in the winter trying so, I kind of prefer bridges myself. I think we ought to get her built.

D. BARTSCH: Okay, thank you very much.

D. MUNRO: Obviously, I think we need a bridge. I don't think there is any question of that. The question to me is, which alternative serves the residents of the Big Flat, and the residents of Missoula County better, aside from the interests of the few people who want to develop some land, and aside from the interests of a few people who want to move some logs out of the forest. What serves the people of the area best. I happen to think bridge alternative C does, but I was not arguing against a bridge. I think it's obvious we need a bridge.

D. BARTSCH: I think he took it that way alright. I guess Dick alluded to a destination and origin study, I don't know whether we've studied the overall pattern of traffic. I guess most of you people who use the roads in the area, those who live in the Big Flat are trying to cross the river for some reason and people on the other side that are trying to get into town if it's more accessible for them to get to the other side, would do it. I guess most of you in the area know better than Dick's crew.

D. THOMPSON: I'm just a little farm boy and I get confused. This is the existing bridge isn't it? And isn't this a county road up here now, right through here, all this on both sides?

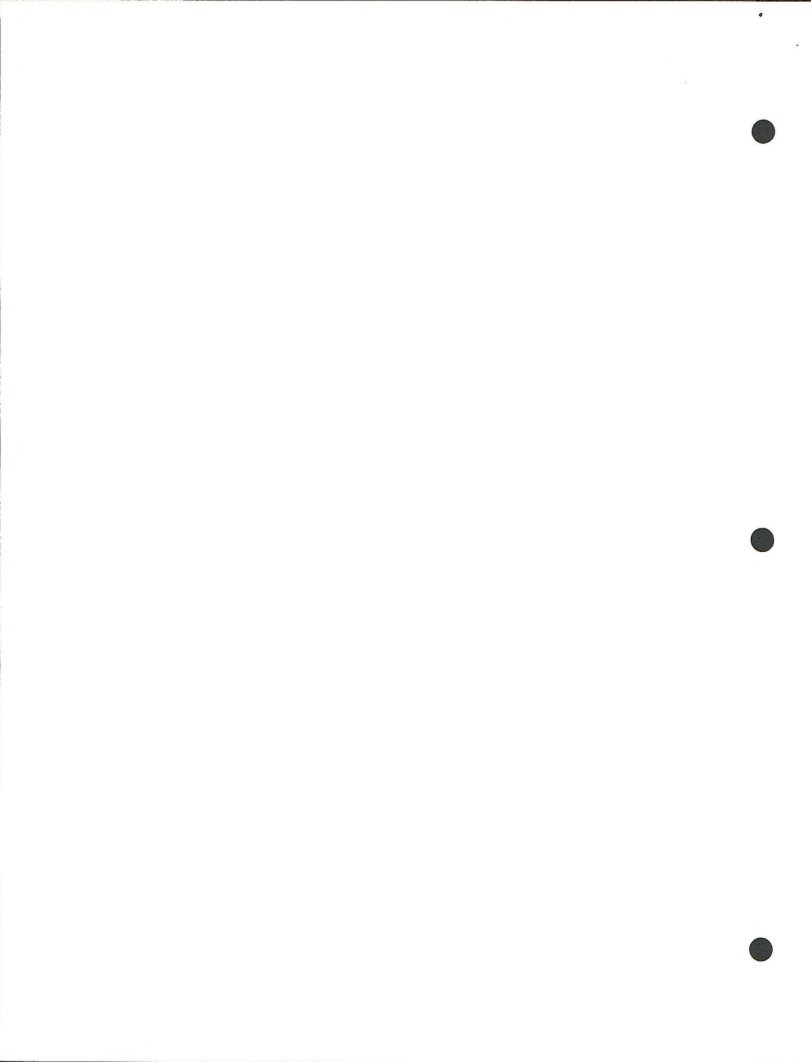
D. COLVILL: The existing county road, you can see it hooks much further back up there, that's kind of a short cut right there.

D. BARTSCH: The existing county road now comes all the way up the gulley here on Deep Creek and then . . .

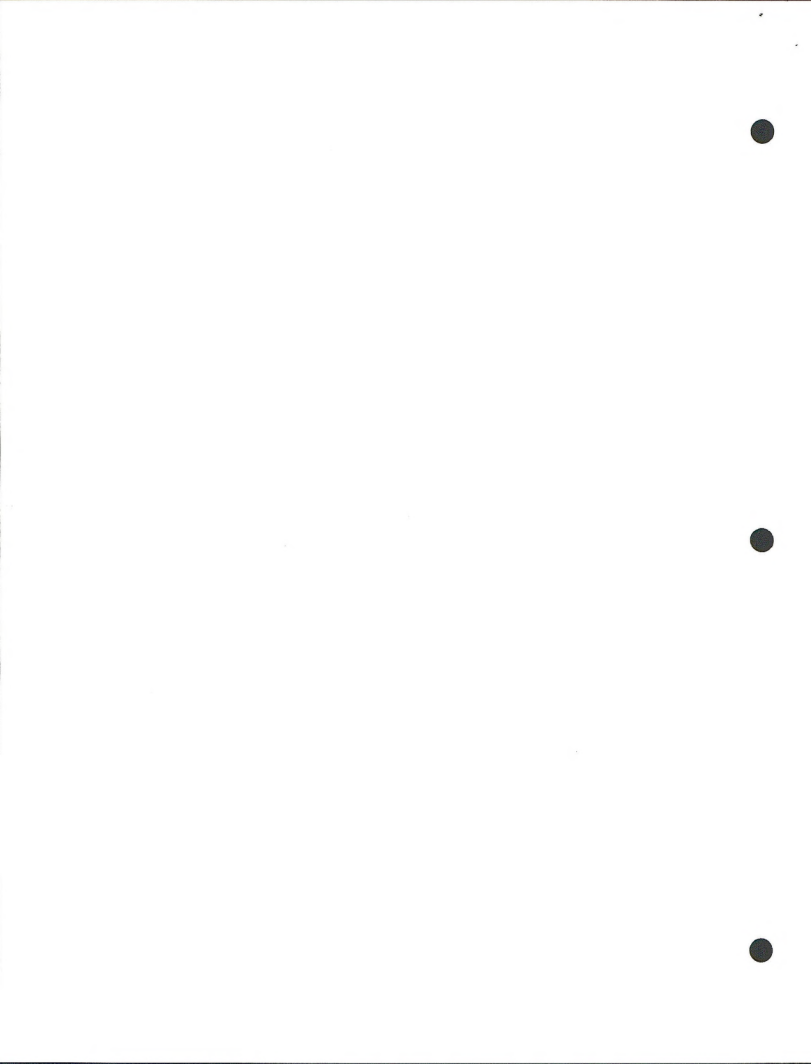
D. THOMPSON: But this is a county road right, all this up through here? Up over the hill and back around the bend, that's all county road now, and this is to, is it not? Then, I guess what my question is, I still can't get it through my head of all this extra land purchase and the cost. Because, if we own the access on both sides of the river and were dealing with this, we don't have to buy, with no land owners through here, that we have to go through property on either side, so were dealing with unimprovable land, which is basically . . . I'd do the survey for nothing really. This land in here, if I'm not mistaken, the man donated once and will donate again. I still can't see where you're coming up with a cost on buying property.

D. BARTSCH: Okay I guess your laying all of the cost on the right of way.

D. THOMPSON: You can't get that much more in a bridge and you can't tell me you can go across land that's going to develop at probably somewhere around 11 or 12 thousand an acre, that your going to go across, compared to rock and gravel beds. I just would like to have, if there's anybody here that sells property, I'd like to see which one they would pay the most for.



- D. COLVILL: There's a couple of things, the price of the right of way on Alternate C is estimated at \$70,000. On the Big Flat side there is some areas where we do not have any right of way, all we have is what is called a prescribed use road, the right to go across there. Besides that, if the road is improved on Alternate C, it's going to require some pretty extensive cuts up the hillside because its steep. It's going to take something much wider than the 60 feet we have through the Champion land and some other places. That's what the added money is for, it's to widen the existing right of way to take care of these cuts and fills we're going to need to go through that sidehill. It's to buy the right of way where we don't have it. There is no right of way costs on the Mullen Road side because we have that.
- D. THOMPSON: Other than the existing County road that's already there?
- D. COLVILL: The \$70,000 in Alternate C for right of way, didn't include anything on the Mullen Road side.
- UNIDENTIFIED: That's better than \$3,000 an acre for trash.
- D. COLVILL: You might call it trash but our experience on trying to buy anything is that it's very valuable.
- UNIDENTIFIED: I'm kind of new to this, so I just want to know, has there been any study at all as to what the impact on the market value of the surrounding property is going to be? Its easy for people to say I want plan A, B, or whatever but they don't live there. What happens to the guy that tries to sell his property?
- D. COLVILL: We have the appraiser's report which tells us what it would cost to purchase right of way.
- J. EMILY: I don't mean that.
- D. COLVILL: I think the only place is the Sturgis home on the end that would suffer a detrement. In the appriaser's report there was none of the others that were suffering.
- E. EMILY: That's not exactly what I meant. What about the man that lives next to the Sturgis' and he tries to resell his property?
- D. COLVILL: Well there's never been anything that says, if the road gets built there, this is going to increase your value or decrease your value. I've never seen that figure. If your in the realstate business you can probably answer that better than I can.
- D. BARTSCH: I guess as far as the Highway Department is concerned, when the Highway Department handles projects, that is not studied.
- W. CURDY: Im a recent resident of Big Flat, being over there a couple of months and I have a couple of questions to ask. I'm one of those unfortunate people who live along that lane and right beside the bridge on Bl. I'm two houses down from Mr. Sturgis, and Ive got a few things I don't think the environmental assessment delt with. Number 1 the social cost concerning



crime, or since the area would have easier access, no comments were made concerning crime or the potential impact of such because more people would be in the area. I'm not a ridged environmentalist, however, I do not belong to any local environmental groups or anything such as that but my family and I have noted a number of times riding our horses in the river bottom eagles nesting in and near the area, feeding on the various stretch right there where the bridge is going to be located, and I think there is a Federal Law somewhere around that deals with eagles since its our national bird. Is that correct? And I just can't believe this assessment that I read this blue thing last night and accompanying little thing that went along with it and I think Mr. Steigler back in 1981, at the May 28th meeting made a comment, he said "the man who must have made assessment make it flying around in the night". It really perplexes me if there are these holes there in the assessment that I point out Im just wondering about other holes that are potentially there in the assessment. Im not any great observer of assessment and I have a couple of other questions to ask. Is 2 feet really acceptable at 100 year flood stage under a bridge? Which hundred years is that?

- P. PARRINI: Its a standard by which most highway bridges are built and designed, for a hundred year flood. A lot of times highway bridges are designed for a lesser flood stage, a 50 year flood or 25 year flood, but clearance is built into a structure so as to pass debris that might be floating on the river.
- W. CURDY: Well it seems a little marginal to me I dont know if anybody else, and another comment I would like to make. Nothing was mentioned about riprap, I know Mrs. Haaglund over there was mentioning about her land being lost to the river. If you take a look upstream from that bridge on B1 for approximately 3 or 400 yards you'll see some substantial erosion along the stream bank. Thats what she mentioned and I dont know if you considered that into your cost, 700 feet of riprap above the bridge.
- B. PETERSON: Im not sure we got into that much detail.
- D. BARTSCH: I was going to ask if our construction either Dick or Morrison and Merillie would consider riprapping 700 feet up.
- W. CURDY: Im saying several hundred feet.
- D. BARTSCH: Oh, several, okay.
- W. CURDY: And I do agree with Mr. Thompson, my avocation during the summer is fighting forest fires, and I can't speak for the Forest Service since I am only a temporary intermentent career employee, but it has been rather difficult to get across the bridge, or get across the river to fight fires in the mountain area. Harper's Bridge would definately be a beneficial access to that area. Or to the Albert Creek, Deep Creek area.
- D. BARTSCH: Okay I guess I can't think of any particular element that we can address anymore than we have as far as his comments. Well certainly take them into consideration and address those in the final review of the project.
- P. GARRETT: I did the wildlife survey over there, Ive been over there at least 4 times by now and have flown the river once. On the survey we performed this spring I did observe 2 eagles using that stretch of the river

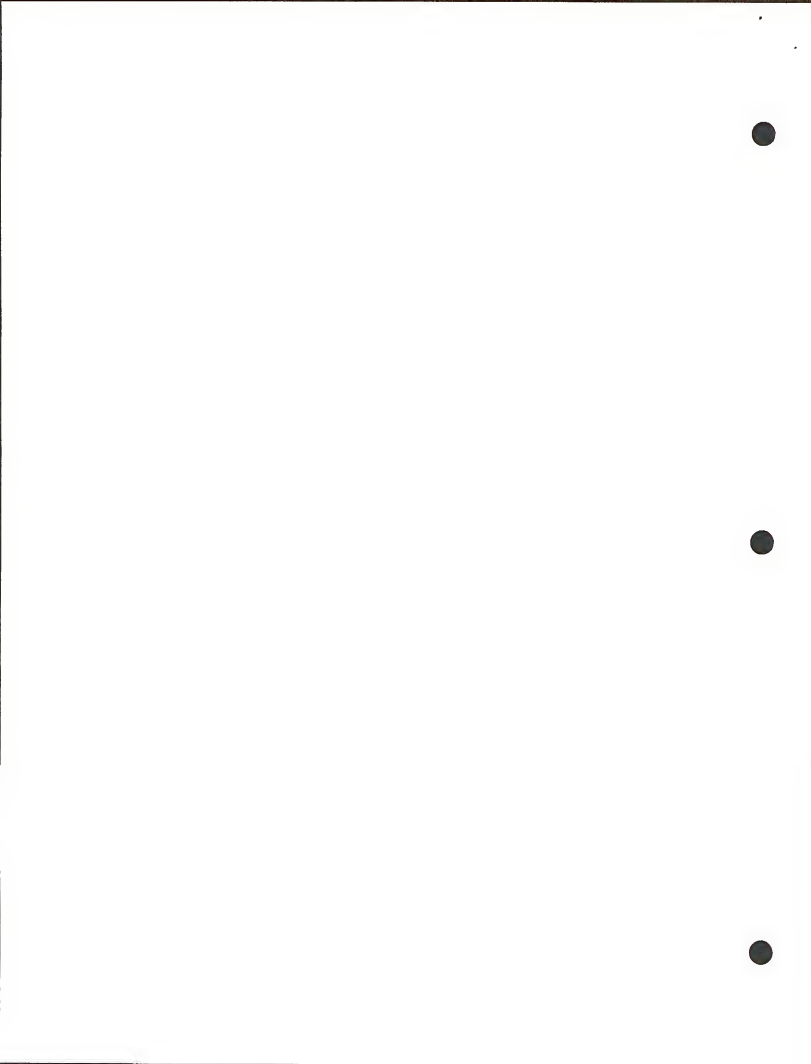
between the existing Harper's Bridge and Alternative B1, but I have not been able to find any evidence of any eagle nesting in there, and have not been able to find the osprey nest somebody said was there the last time. So if you're talking about the Wildlife Survey in regard to eagles, as having a hole, yes there are eagles up and down that stretch of the river. I don't find any evidence of nesting and with the extensive amount of riparian habitat that is available through that stretch of the river, I really don't believe Alternative B1, or Alternative C would significantly effect eagles using that area. Thank you.

- W. CURDY: I have one statement to make about Alternate B1. Barely visible at alternate B1 are some powerlines that come across and serve the entire Big Flat area, and I did not notice in your statement of costs any dollar figures for the relocation of that crossing. Unless of course the people in Big Flat are going to go without power.
- D. BARTSCH: Unless there are some significant utility lines that would parallel a proposed road construction that would require an extensive amount of alignment change on a power line, powerline crossings usually don't constitute a tremendous cost. I don't know if you included that as part of your right of way costs or not, Brad?
- B. PETERSON: We were aware of those power lines and they are included in the cost of construction.
- D. BARTSCH: Okay you did include them in the cost and those are normally part of the right of way agreements either with landowners or with the power company as they become a moving item that they take care of.
- K. KENDALL: I live down there on Johanna Drive just off from Alternate B1. I'm in favor of B1, I guess I've got a question for Dick. They close Harper's Bridge down, they condemn it, why do they replank it, run guardrails up around the sides and put woven wire down on it?
- D. COLVILL: I don't want to get too deep into the existing bridge at this hearing, but we closed it because it was unsafe for cars. We feel that the guardrail that you see there now will take care of you if you hit it on a bicycle or motorcycle or if you're on foot. In other words, I see no problem now with anybody falling off the bridge. It's a much lighter guardrail than would have been put up if it had to hold cars. As far as the planking goes, I guess it was an effort we made to help the people that have to get across the bridge. We felt as long as the bridge is there, it will support this type of traffic. Someday it will wash out, but now I feel quite confident that there won't be an accident for the traffic that it is now using.
- T. CHARLES: What kind of inclines will you have on these bridges, on the approaches on both sides of the bridges at A, B and C?
- D. BARTSCH: Okay the grades of the approaches?
- T. CHARLES: Exactly.
- D. BARTSCH: Okay, does somebody over there have the information, can you give us some grades approaching each side of each site.

- B. PETERSON: For Alternative A the grades on the bridge are 5% and that is the steepest part of the roadway. The approaches are 5% also, for a short distance. On Alternative B1, the maximum grades are around 1%, fairly flat. On Alternative C the grades on the bridge itself are 2%, and the grades around the corner where Dan's finger is. . .
- D. BARTSCH: This sharp corner there at station 190.
- B. PETERSON: They are about 8%.
- J. STIGLER: Im John Stigler, I own the property there on B1 next to the Kona Ranch. I realize that there has to be a new bridge put in, and B of course would do a lot of damage to the ranch but Im definately in favor of B1.
- D. BARTSCH: There's a landowner infavor of B1.
- J. STIGLER: How wide is that right of way that you're speaking of?
- D. COLVILL: I think we were looking at 80 feet, Im not totally sure. How much of it's going to be on your property and how much on the Kona Ranch, we haven't exactly settled yet. In the design we have now, the bulk of it will be on the Kona Ranch and try to straddle the existing road there.
- D. BARTSCH: I guess that's one of those questions that we can't nail down to close yet until we get a better survey so that they know how much fill and that sort of thing. That's the best guess Dick can give you. While you're thinking for a minute, I'll fill you in on a couple of things that I know about, that will happen immediately after the hearing. As I said we're taping all the comments, we will prepare and send out that transcript. Which brings up something, as we did before we had a couple of booklets here for sign-up sheets. We would like to have everyone who spoke, put your name and address down so we make sure we have your name correct and that we will automatically send you a copy of the transcript. Anyone else who did not speak if they wish a copy of the transcript make sure your name is on one of those booklets. If you know someone who is not here this evening that would want a transcript, would you put their name and address down. This will serve as my mailing list for that.

I mention about writing in any comments you may think of later that you would like to add to the review of the project. If you know someone who is not here that would probably want to make a comment and insert their thoughts on it, let them know that they can write in. Either address an envelope to Dick at the County or to me. I think most everyone got one of those gold pamphlets, on the inside back cover is the address of the Public Hearings Unit for the Highway, that will get to me and those written statements will also be added to the transcript as part of the input. I do have some self addressed envelopes to the highway if you wish to take one of those for that purpose.

After the transcript is prepared it will be distributed to of course the County Officials, State Officials, Federal Officials for review, somehow or another which we haven't quite decided, those people will then express a preference or a decision or an action which will then be the location and design approval document. I think also what we'll have to happen is, the comments that were offered here this evening will have to be addressed



D. BARTSCH:
(continued)

in the environmental assessment final that is prepared at this point and it will be brought up to date to include these comments and where possible address the environmental things that you spoke of this evening. We'll try to address those and then that will be the basis for hopefully the final decision that we can go ahead one of the alternates and that will eventually be done. When it comes to pass that it will be approved as one of the alternates then I will receive that approval and I will send a notice advising all of those on my mailing list of that action.

I guess that will be the formal step that will tell Dick the county can go ahead and start the next steps as far as; completing design, getting the actual lines and surveys put together, on the ground just where it will be, all those details will then start to go together. Sometime after that, the approval of the right of way plans will come about and Dick will then be able to begin contacting the people or authorizing whoever will be purchasing the right of way, appraising and going through the right of way process. This gets back to the gentlemen's question on the date for letting, the outline I just gave, could take anywhere from a few months to a couple of years. That's why, at this time, a date isn't realistic. Dick?

D. COLVILL: I might add something to help ease the public's mind. I might mention, if I'm wrong from what I'm saying, you or Gordon jump in and tell me. This is a study, it isn't a final design. Once the site gets selected then the design process will be done under the Highway Department. If the geology, which we haven't talked about, comes out bad, if the flood plain analysis comes out bad, if something really startling happens, for instance, they suddenly discover our detail design is going to have a 4 foot backup on the flood plain or something like this, I gather then you will fall back and we will talk about it or involve the public some more. If something startling comes up in the design phase that isn't anticipated in the study, then we'll recycle the process.

D. BARTSCH: I think that happens on any job. Maybe it's not said often enough, even on our highway projects, we go along and say yeah we've chosen this and everybody says okay. As the design details start coming in and like Dick says the geology study, they go out and they'll drill a lot of test holes to make sure that the ground will hold the bridge and if some startling report comes up and says that will sink in a few years, then Gordon and Right of Way, the Engineers and Dick will be calling them and whoever made the study will turn in the report and the site may conceivably wash out. We may have to look for an alternative and if it's a severe enough change, it then constitutes maybe coming back to where we were at tonight. We could be looking at some other alternate.

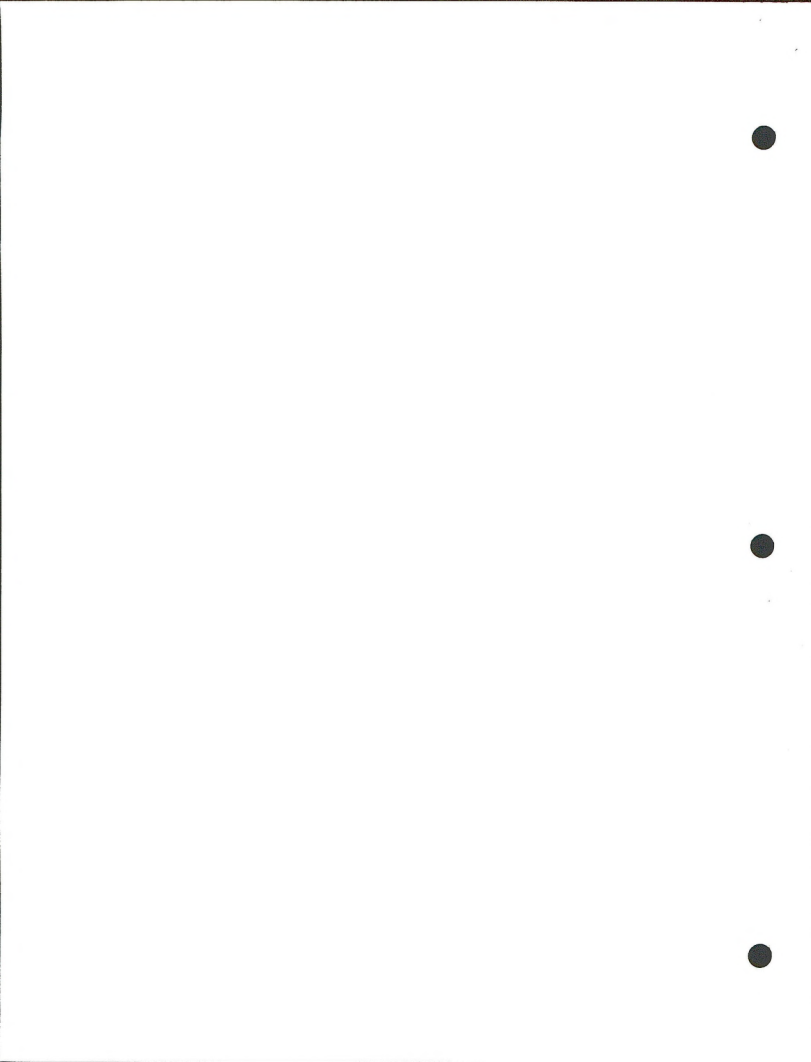
That hopefully won't happen, but it's conceivable, it's a slim possibility. As they go along in the design, they look at those details and well hopefully make those corrections and make those judgements and confer with everybody and make sure that is going to go along alright.

R. WILHELM: My name is Roy Wilhelm, I live out in Big Flat. I'm in favor of B1 for quite a few reasons. The insurance benefits to my property out there, the quick response to town for ambulance, fire, whatever protections that I can get out there. There is another part that I'd look at, we all know

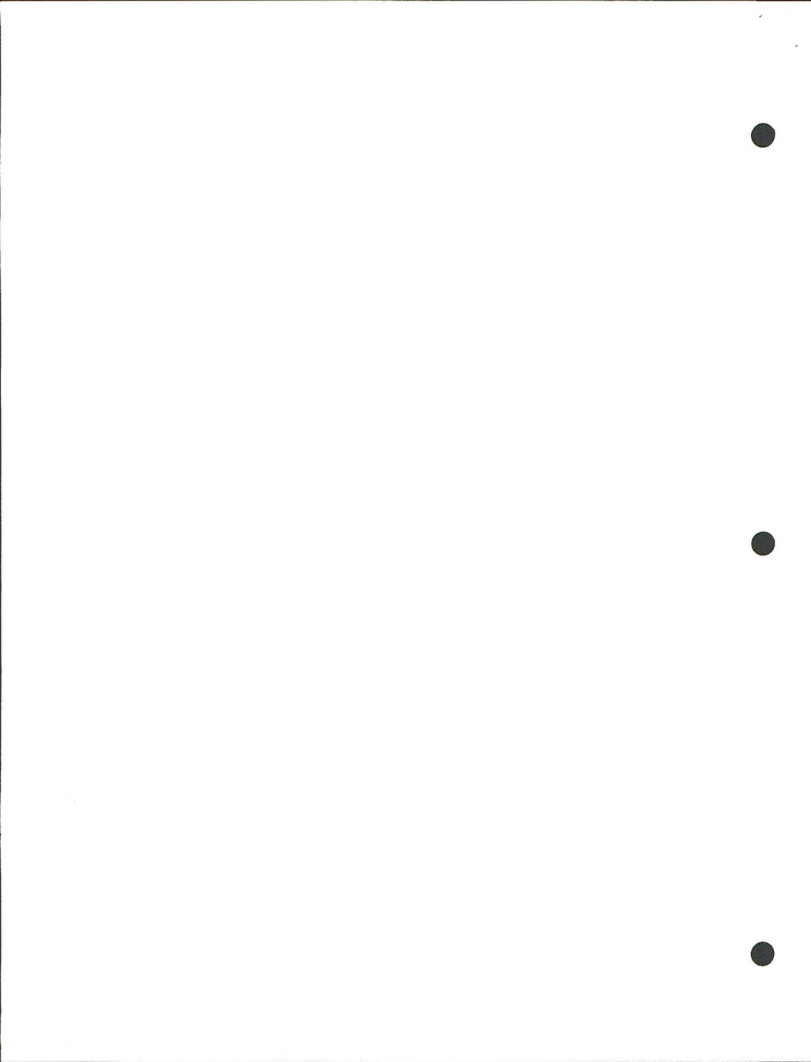


what McClay Bridge is. It's a 1 lane bridge thats getting pretty old and antique, how much longer is it going to last, were talking 4 years to get started on this bridge. What is the life expectancy Dick, of McClay Bridge.

- D. COLVILL: McClays is a lot better than Harper's, but McClays has got a posted load limit so there is always a possibility of somebody going accross it with a load that exceeds the load limit. I know as well as you do that this happens, and if it just happens to be a big enough load you could loose McClay Bridge that way someday.
- R. WILHELM: Then if we lost it then we wouldn't have a bridge at all across the river. Those are my reasons for wanting B1 put in as quick as possible.
- D. BARTSCH: I guess that just brings up a question to my mind, if the load limit were adhered to, McClay Bridge could stand for quite a while, structurally, is that true?
- D. COLVILL: Yes, we've had McClay Bridge analyzed by Morrison & Maierle it so happens, they did a study in about '76 and came up with the load limits and they came up with some riprap which we did on the pier. So, baring something unforeseen, we anticipate that McClay Bridge would be there for awhile.
- D. BARTSCH: I think you have a fair fear that we probably better get on with this as soon as possible.
- D. THOMPSON: One other comment then, if were going to bring that other bridge, wouldn't also Harper's Bridge take light car traffic just as well as the other bridge, providing it was maintained at a passenger during this period of 4 yeas or whatever? All I've heard is the bridge is going to wash out, so is the world is going to come to end. Wouldn't Harper's Bridge take light car traffic just as well as it always has? Are there any particular reasons that someone could show me why it would not?
- D. COLVILL: Well again, I don't want to go into the closure of Harper's Bridge, that's a seperate subject but, no Harper's Bridge won't take anywhere near the loads. At the time we closed it I think it was ticketed for 3 tons, McClay Bridge is 10 tons. We didn't feel like it would even hold the 3 tons anymore.
- D. BARTSCH: I know that a couple of real thorough studies were made on its structure and its potential life, Dick had mentioned that are pretty slim and thats about all I can offer.
- T. MOEDE: I live out in Big Flat and I have one question that if this project by the Fish and Game does go through and gets underway and the bridge goes in at, lets say Alternate B1, then, due to the traffic which is over the unpaved seciton of road up to the old Harper's site, the people demand or the use demands improvement, we'll be spending twice the money, it's the most expensive way now. I'm not going either way as far as for B or C, but as far as the expense? ? ? Because that is a high recreational area and if the Fish and Game puts in a facility there, there is going to be a awful lot of traffic on that, as you call, potentially dangerous stretch of road.



- D. BARTSCH: I guess what your question is, will there be some work done it.
- T. MOEDE: Will there possibly have to be, lets say, do Alternate B1 and then turn around and have to do half of Alternate C. . . No bridge but a road to that site.
- D. COLVILL: I guess that is a possibility, I can't say it isn't.
- T. MOEDE: So you would be spending twice the money?
- D. COLVILL: I would say it is a possibility, I don't say its a certainty. Its just like you say, if the public demands it and the money is there to do it then we would have to do it.
- T. MOEDE: But you could go through the whole thing and in 5 years, the Fish and Game, by the time you got your money appropriated, they would have that facility lets say operational, and then you're probably another 4 years down the road because you'd have to scrap everything and start over again. I'd hate to see it delayed.
- D. COLVILL: Well again, what the impact of the Fish and Game is, I don't know. Whether they can build a facility that's going to increase the traffic tremendously without doing something to help the road, I don't know.
- T. MOEDE: Is this a situation where the State and the County don't know what's going on, there surely should be some conversation between.
- A. MURRAY: I'm Ann Mary Dussault County Commissioner. It happened that at our last Public Hearing last Wednesday night, the Fish and Game Department came in and made a presentation on the Deep Creek Proposal. The reality is, they have no money to proceed with that project at this time. There plans were formulated way to late to get into the long range building program for the legislature to consider, so it's merely a proposal on paper at this point. I think Commissioner Evan's asked them, as a matter of fact, whether the site selection of Harper's Bridge would make any difference to them in their proposal, and they said no. So it is a paper proposal at this point. I think we've indicated the support for it but there is no money right now to purchase property or to proceed with the project.
- B. EVANS: Im Barbara Evans County Commissioner. About a year ago Mr. Greenwood came to see me and we discussed the Deep Creek project at least a year ago, so this is not some brand new idea that is going to get momentum and were going to have it next week. He also realizes that getting any money out of the Legislature this year is very questionable. I doubt very much that there going to get any this year. We do not have this project in our capital improvement project. I dont know if and when we would have any park money available to help out on this, so if its a matter of money the way I look at it its going to be a substantial period of time before there able to do anything. We do support the concept of it and we hope there able to do it, but we personally can't base our decision on where to put the bridge, on where there going to have recreational area. Certainly if the recreational goes, and it requires some work on the road we would have to cross that bridge at that time. No pun intended. But I don't look for that to seriously impact the bridge no matter where we put it, or the bridge to seriously impact the recreation area.

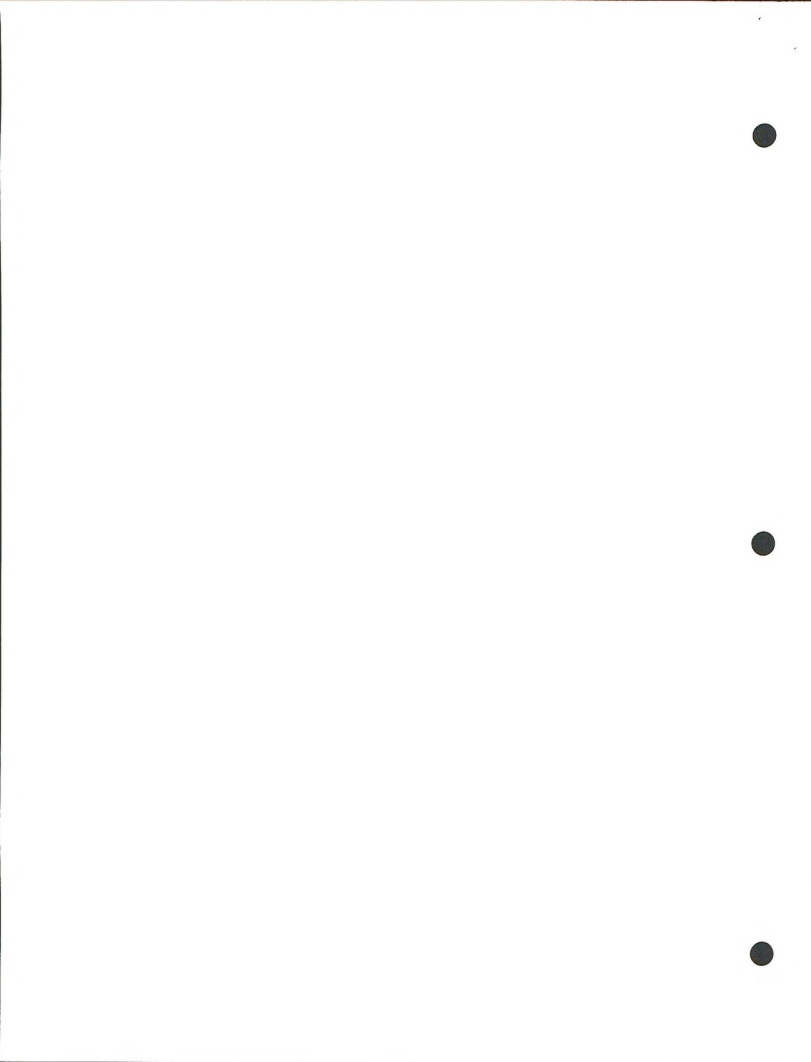


D. THOMPSON: They probably are not according to the politicians, may be there not moving to fast but it is to the point where they both have already notified the leasees, which I am one of, of the impact it's going to have on our range land, which we have some 20 thousand acres up in that area. It also has been surveyed by the Champion International and is already getting ready to exchange this property. So maybe their going to be there before the County is. I think someone ought to at least check into it before they cross that bridge. They may not have a bridge to cross. No pun intended.

M. KEENER: My name is Martha Keener and we live a mile just off of the pavement on Big Flag. You were talking about safety. One of the things on safety, the traffic has not changed since Harper's Bridge has been closed. We still have the same amount of traffic up there. So, if you were going for safety, you would want to go ahead and fix the road up there. Also, you mentioned that it would effect the wildlife up there. The traffic has not effected it yet, and so I am for Alternate C because there isn't any difference in traffic. Also, it does cut us off from our friends on the other side where we all have to go all the way around too and it does wear and tear on our vehicle as well as these other vehicles, and so Im for Alternative C.

D. BARTSCH: Okay thank you, that will be one of the things taken into consideration as I said, as far as the final review goes. Okay any body else, last comments. Don't forger I do have the signup sheets up here.

I guess one person I forgot to announce over there, the gal that was handing out all of the paper work for you, Sally Russell is our office Manager in Helena, she is down here on another meeting so she came out and helped me. Thank you Sally. Thank you all very much for input this evening, good night.



Bohler 4

MINUTES

INFORMAL MEETING OF BIG FLAT AREA RESIDENTS:

NOVEMBER 23, 1981

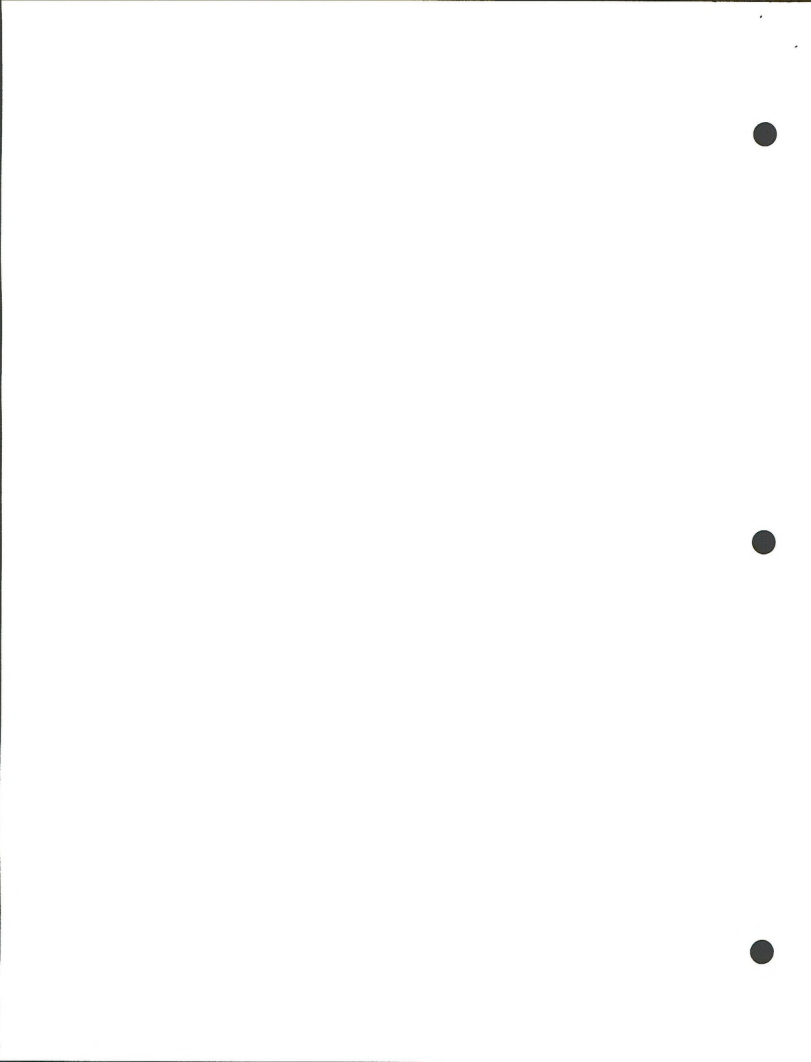
A meeting was convened at the home of Byron and Judith Olson at 1430 Big Flat Road the evening of Monday, November 23, 1981, attended by concerned residents of the Big Flat area of Missoula for the purpose of discussing the potential impact of a proposed bridge in this area.

The bridge in question is the proposed replacement of Harper's Bridge. The Missoula County Commissioners recently selected a site about four miles upstream from the existing bridge. It is the change of the location of the bridge which prompts considerable concern among the residents present at this meeting.

Considerable discussion was held in respect to various aspects of this question. Persons present all seemed to be in agreement that a bridge is necessary at the lower end of Big Flat. Most people present would be in favor of utilizing the present bridge site even if it meant replacement with a single-lane bridge with no change in access. Others felt that perhaps the new site would represent an improvement which would benefit some people, however there was concern expressed by all persons present about the impact of a bridge at the new site. It was generally felt that this has not been adequately studied. The very cursory environmental impact review of the proposed new site is totally inadequate and leaves many questions of grave concern to the residents unanswered. As a result of this feeling, the enclosed petition was signed by all persons present unanimously calling for a comprehensive formal environmental impact statement prior to any future decisions in respect to this bridge. In addition, a petition will be circulated throughout the entire area to further endorse this call for an environmental impact statement.

The specific concerns are wide-ranging. A major concern is the future traffic use. Implicit in this is concern about the implied but not expressed plan for some type of a west side bypass linking the junction of Highway 93 North and I-90 with 93 South. Such a bypass would have immense impact on the area. The present Big Flat road would be in no way adequate to handle the projected traffic increase without major improvements throughout its length. Because of the terrain and location of this road, the costs of this development of course would be extremely large and the impact on the area very great. One of the areas of most concern about this enlarged road is the area now known as Hidden Heights. The quality of this residential area would be drastically altered by such a road.

The relatively large amount of flood plain and changeable course of the river is also a major concern to area residents. A recent alteration for the purpose of developing an irrigation system by one of the ranches had an immediate impact on the river course, resulting in significant erosion on the opposite shore with as much as five-acre losses of land from properties downstream. The impact of the actual bridge construction and site chosen would have to be very carefully studied including the area



above this bridge site which may require rather extensive placement of rip-rap along the river banks. In addition, the Big Flat irrigation ditch runs quite close to the river just upstream of Melody Lane and would be jeopardized by any change in river course near that site.

In addition, the height of the bridge as proposed at the County Commissioners meeting in May would be such that during high water there would be a high risk of accumulation of large amounts of debris against the bridge.

Flood erosion of the towers carrying electric power across the river in that area would jeopardize the power source for the entire Big Flat area. This has occurred in the past and would require careful study.

The entire area of Big Flat and upstream areas through the Hidden Heights area have been carefully zoned with numerous reinforcing covenants to preserve the rural atmosphere of this area and eliminate the construction of trailer courts or any commercial activity. The population density also has been limited. This has received strong support from the residents of the area and reflects the ongoing feeling of this zone to try to preserve the current rural atmosphere.

Wildlife abounds in this area, including osprey, deer, moose, badger, beaver, eagles, numerous other birds and waterfowl, and occasional elk are seen in this area. The quality of life in this rural atmosphere has attracted the present residents with the full knowledge that there is limited access. It is our great fear that the new bridge has the potential of drastically altering this aspect of life on Big Flat and reinforces the need for a very careful environmental impact study.

The Council Grove area just downstream of the bridge is an important historic site which must be also protected and given careful thought.

The residents continue to feel that the replacement of the present old bridge or conceivably even the limited repair of the present old bridge has not been given adequate careful thought.

We hope the above considerations will emphasize the importance of requiring a comprehensive environmental impact statement before any further decisions are made in respect to the Harper Bridge replacement.

Respectfully submitted,

Byron C. Olson, M. D.
Acting Secretary

ATTACHED Petition

112 Signatures

86 Households.

16 duplicates
either on this
form - or later list

Letter was presented to the
Comm & Dept on 11-30-81

Steve

Date Recd. Preconst. 11-30-81	Initial	
	Attach	
MAIL	UTE	
Info	30	
Act	30 Eng. Specialist	
	31 Central Phone	
	32 Loc. Rep. Design	
	33 Environ. Eng.	
	34 Hydraulic	
	35 Sanitary Design	
	36 Traffic	
	37 Pub. Hearing	
	38 Photography	
	39 Consultant Design	
	40	
	Beailler	

3340 BigFlat Rd.
Missoula, Mt.

Dear Sir:

I support the need for a study that compares the enviromental impacts (physical, biological, sâcial, and economic) of the four alternatives for a bridge to replace Harper bridge. I do not want an enviromental impact statement that will simply disclose the impacts of the selected alternative or one that simply justifies the decision already made. This would be a total waste of the tax-payers money.

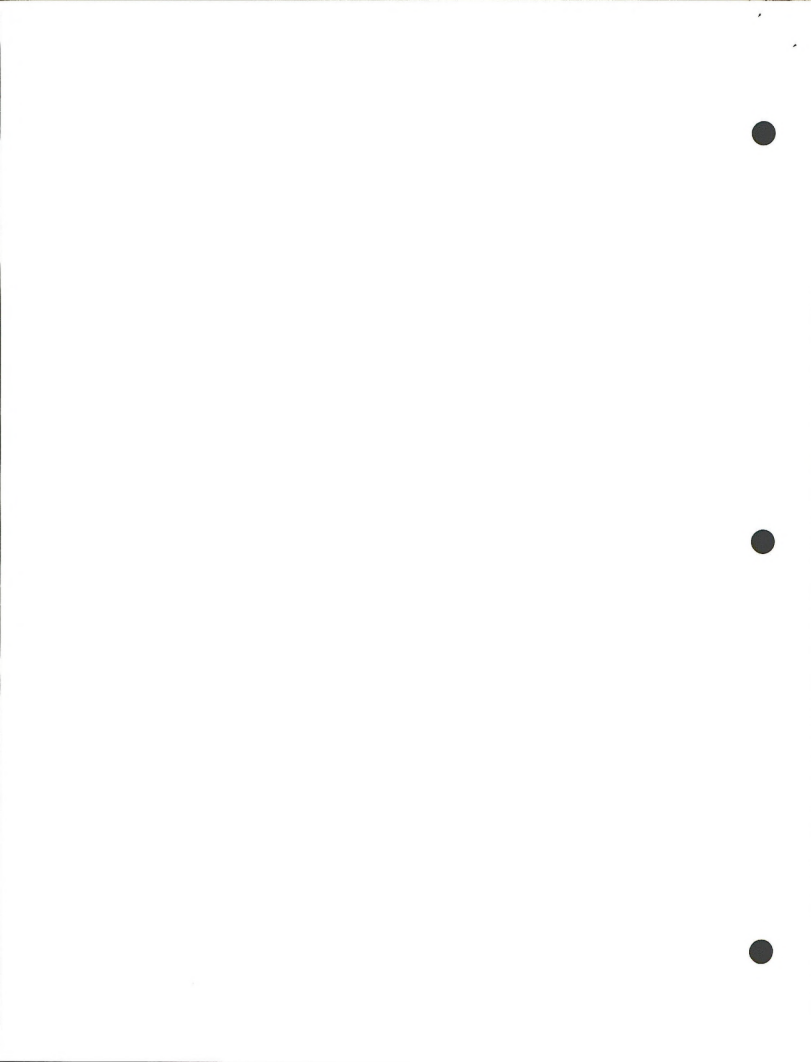
I do not believe that the people of Missoula county and in particular those of the Big Flat area have been made fully aware of the full social and economic impacts on them which will result from a new bridge across the river. The easier access will result in a change in life style of the residents of Big Flat it may result in furthur sub-division of lands on Big Flat. This may result in an increased enrollment at target Range school which could result in a new school or an addition to the present school with the resulting bond for financing thus higher taxes.

Is it the intent to create a new by-pass around Missoula? What standard road is to be built from the new bridge to hihgway 93? What are the long term as well as the short term impacts to the community and to the Big Flat residents? Will there be a new by-pass that will result in reduced business for those buisenesses along Reserve street?

There are many Qestions that have not been answered and the citezens of Missoula have a right to have answers before the tax-payers money are spent.

Thank You for your consideration:





TARGET RANGE HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' RESOLUTION
REGARDING HARPER'S BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

The Target Range Homeowners' Association supports what we feel to be the consensus of the Big Flat Homeowners.

At a public meeting in May of 1981, the overwhelming sentiment expressed by those present was in support of replacement of the present Harper's Bridge with a safer bridge at the present site.

The homeowners have expressed a desire for a one lane bridge replacement, but realizing that this is not a safe alternative, we support a two lane bridge using the present approaches. We feel that this option has not been fully explored except in a needlessly deluxe version.

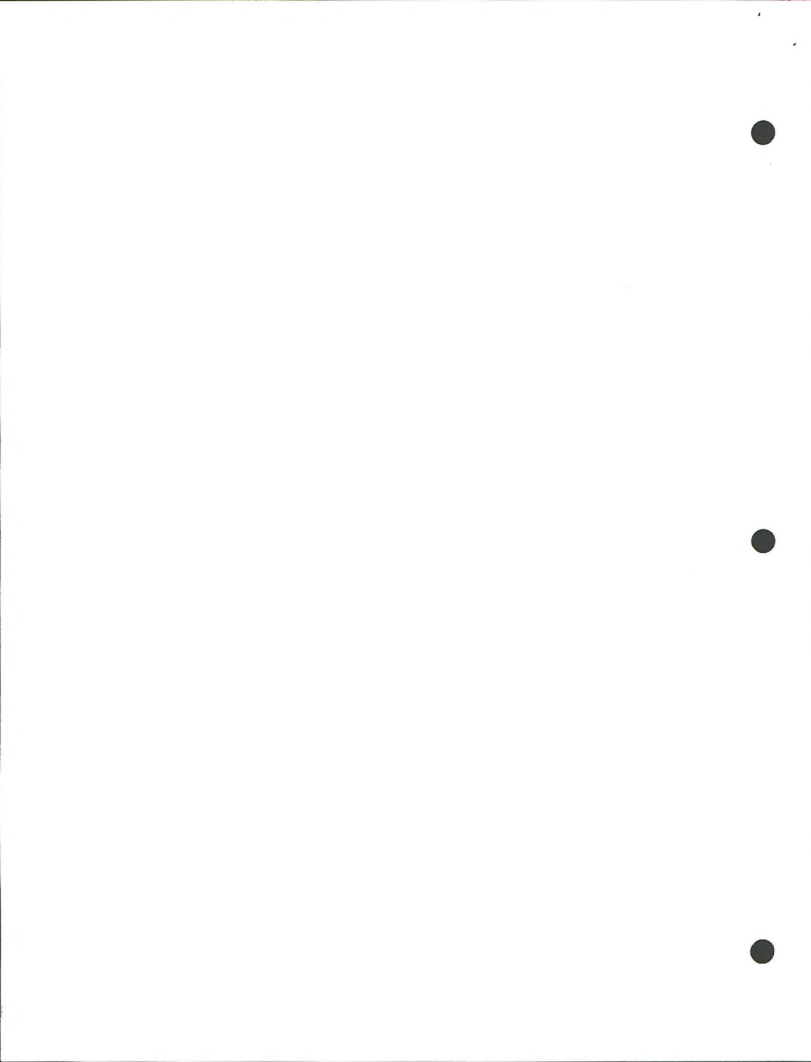
Any other alternatives, we feel, would have a markedly detrimental effect on the living environment of the Big Flat.

We further feel that any significant change in traffic patterns through the Big Flat would markedly congest what is now a semi-rural residential area of Missoula County and eventually favor rapid and commercial development of the Big Flat area.

On this basis, we particularly oppose the concept of a western Missoula bypass through the Big Flat and any plans for a bridge that would later serve this purpose.

Paul R. Pramenko
President
Target Range Homeowners' Association

RSM:kk



2-23-83

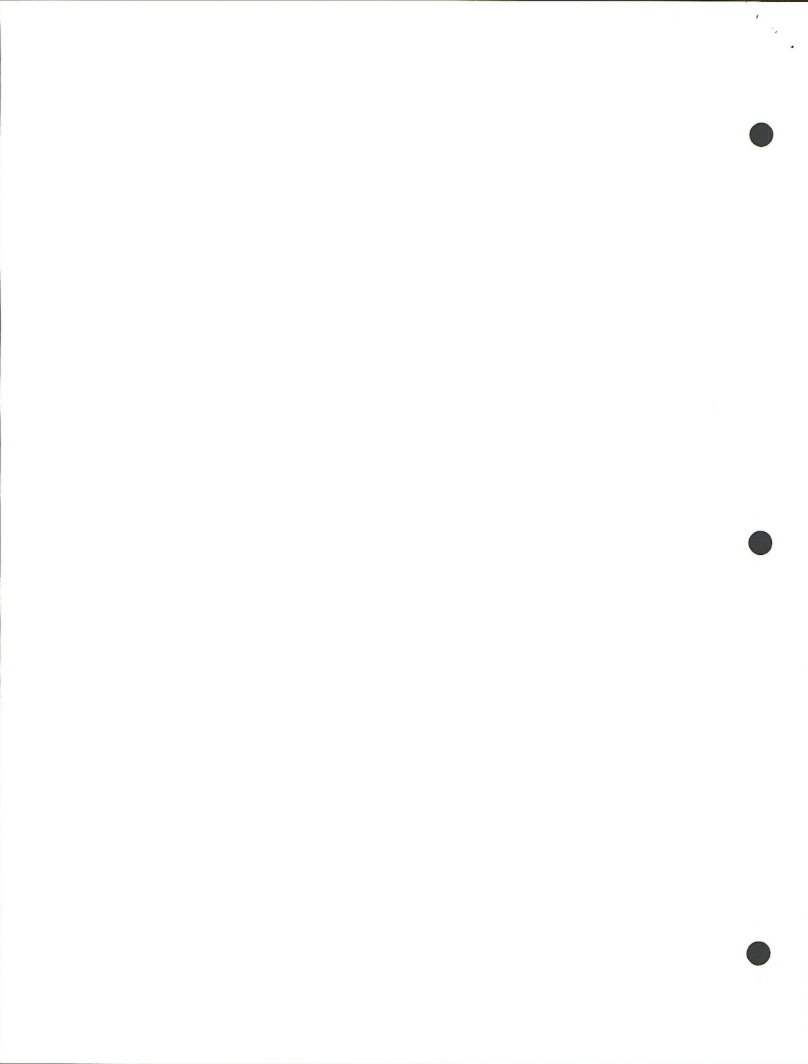
Dear Sirs,

My letter concerns the replacement of the old Harper Bridge.

If it is not feasible to replace the bridge at its original spot, I too am in favor of Alternate B1. Since I work for Champion Packaging it would be to my advantage to have the new bridge as soon as possible.

Thank you!
Jack Phillips

Jack Phillips
2920 B.g Flat Rd.
Mesa. MT. 59801



Feb. 14, 1983

He appreciated the survey book of the Hager
Bridge which we read and have handed it around
to our Big Flat neighbors.

We are now down in the mountains of northeast Calif. visiting at our daughter's home and may not be back in Missoula in time for the scheduled Haas Bridge meeting. However we want you to know that we are in favor of the plan the state Bridge Dept. recommends ^(B1). We feel a bridge at that location will benefit a greater number of Big Flat residents.

Thank you

Sincerely
Lennus & Julia Ekstrand
11,808 Virginia Lane, Plc #1

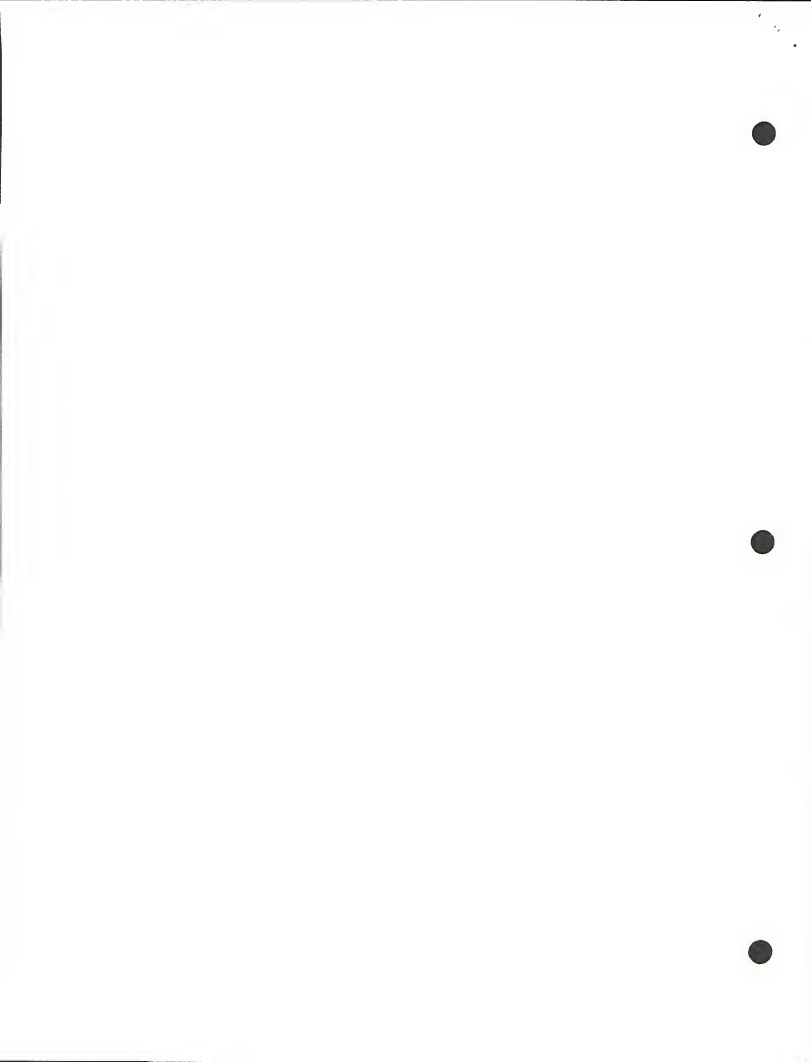
RECEIVED

FEB 17 1983

MISSOULA CO. SURVEYOR

By _____

Date Recd. Preconst. <u>2-2-80</u>				
Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
		30 Eng. Specialties		
		31 Contract Plans		
		32 Loc. Road Design		
		33 Environment		
		34 Hydraulic		
		35 Surfacing Design		
		36 Traffic		
✓		37 Pub. Hearing		
		38 Photogrammetry		
✓		39 Consultant Design		
✓		File		



Missoula, 2-11-83

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Project. BR 9032 (4)
Harpers Bridge

We, David Urfer and Margaret Urfer are in favor of a new bridge.

A new bridge would alleviate a number of problems such as icy roads in the winter and a congested McKlay bridge in the summer.

Alternative B1 seems to be the logical place for a new bridge.


David Urfer

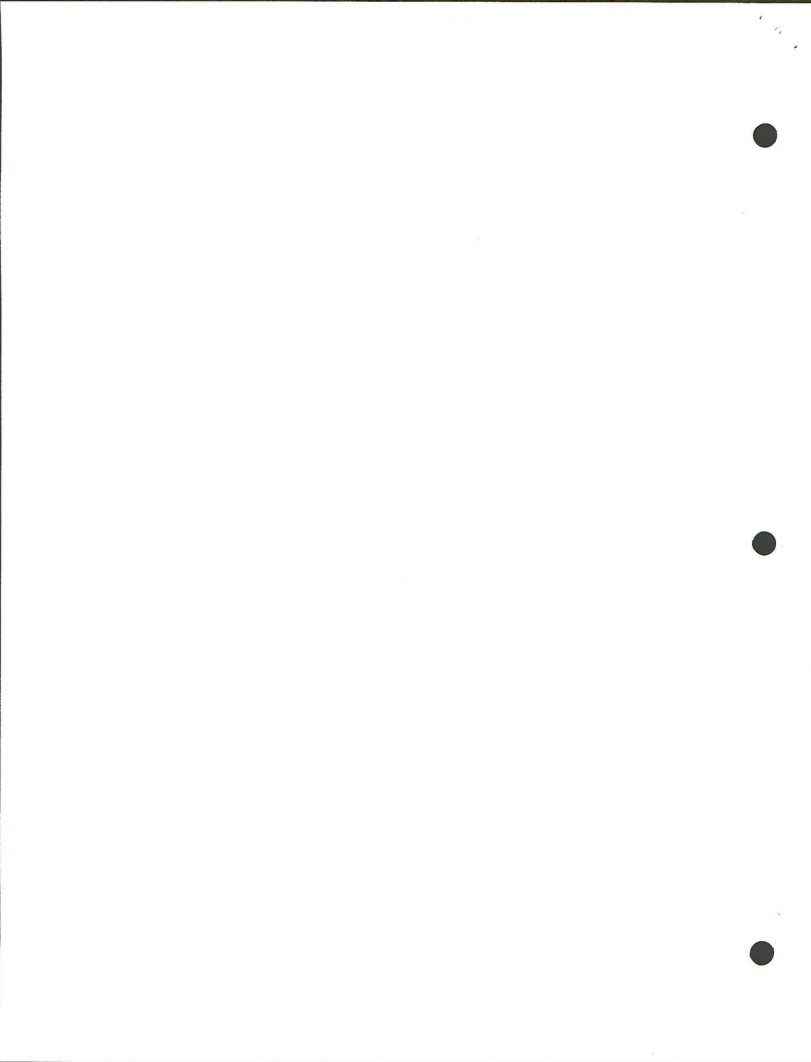

Margaret Urfer

2875 Urfer Drive

Missoula, Montana 59801

Department of Highways
Public Hearings Unit
2701 Prospect Ave.
Helena, Montana 59620

Date Recd. Preconst. <i>2/11/83</i>			
Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Initial
		30 <i>SCB</i>	
		30 Eng. Specialties	
		31 Contract Plans	
		32 Loc. Road Design	
		33 Environment	
		34 Hydraulic	
		35 Surfacing Design	
		36 Traffic	
		37 Pub. Hearing	
		38 Photogrammetry	
		39 Consultant Design	
		<i>Legal</i>	
		File	



Public Hearings that
Gary J. Wick
Director of Highways
Unit 2701 Prospect Ave
Helena, MT 59620

-1-

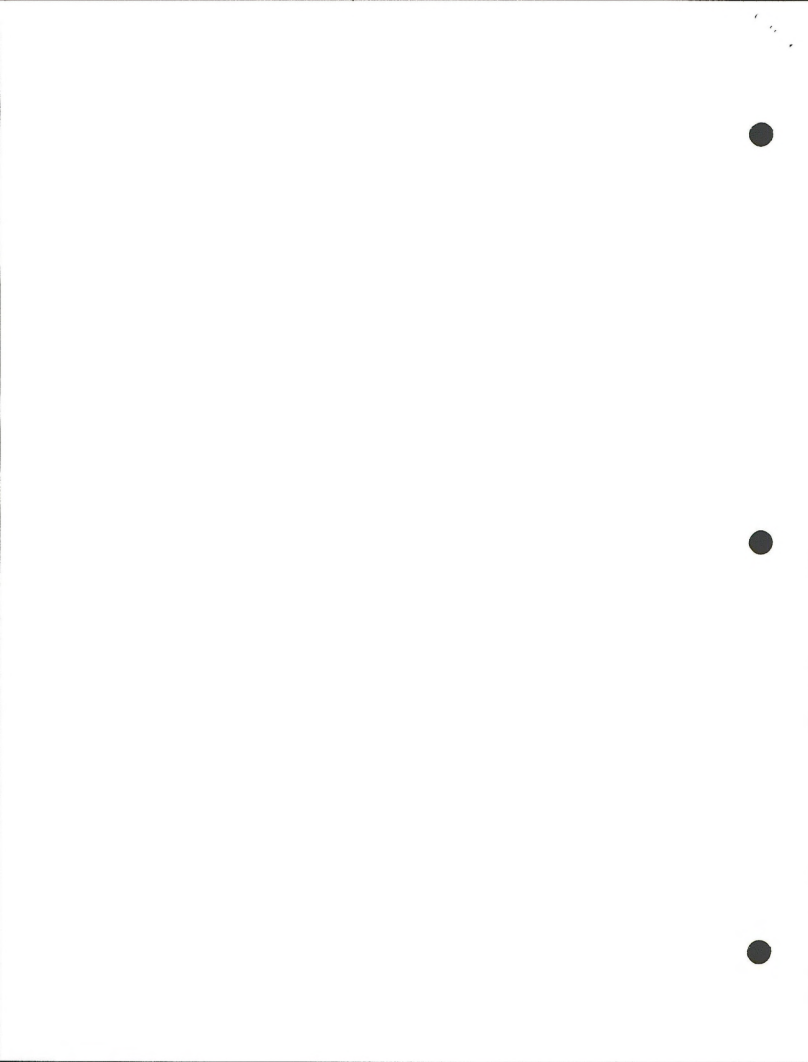
February 7, 1983

Subject: Project BR 9032 (4)
Harpers Bridge

Gentlemen:

I am opposed to the proposed location of the new bridge to replace Harpers Bridge for the following reasons:

- ① The new bridge is too close to Missoula and too far from the next downstream bridge (Alberton) to adequately serve the public whose access is severely restricted and substantially lengthened by having the new bridge moved to the proposed site.
- ② The new bridge is too expensive as well as the new roads which must be built to serve the bridge at the proposed site. The County officials (past and present) who have clamored for "free federal and/or state" money and have grasped at straws for any reason to qualify for these "free" funds should be admonished in my opinion. One of these "reasons" has been touted to be the future Highway 93 Bypass of Missoula across the new bridge, which (in itself) is now deemed not feasible. This idea would require heavy highway construction along Blue Mountain and Black Mountain, which is ridiculous - save very, very expensive.
- ③ The reasons given by the County (with the help of their own County attorney, and so-called "disinterested" private consultant) for closure of Harpers Bridge were, first, the County's fear of being sued if somebody would fall off



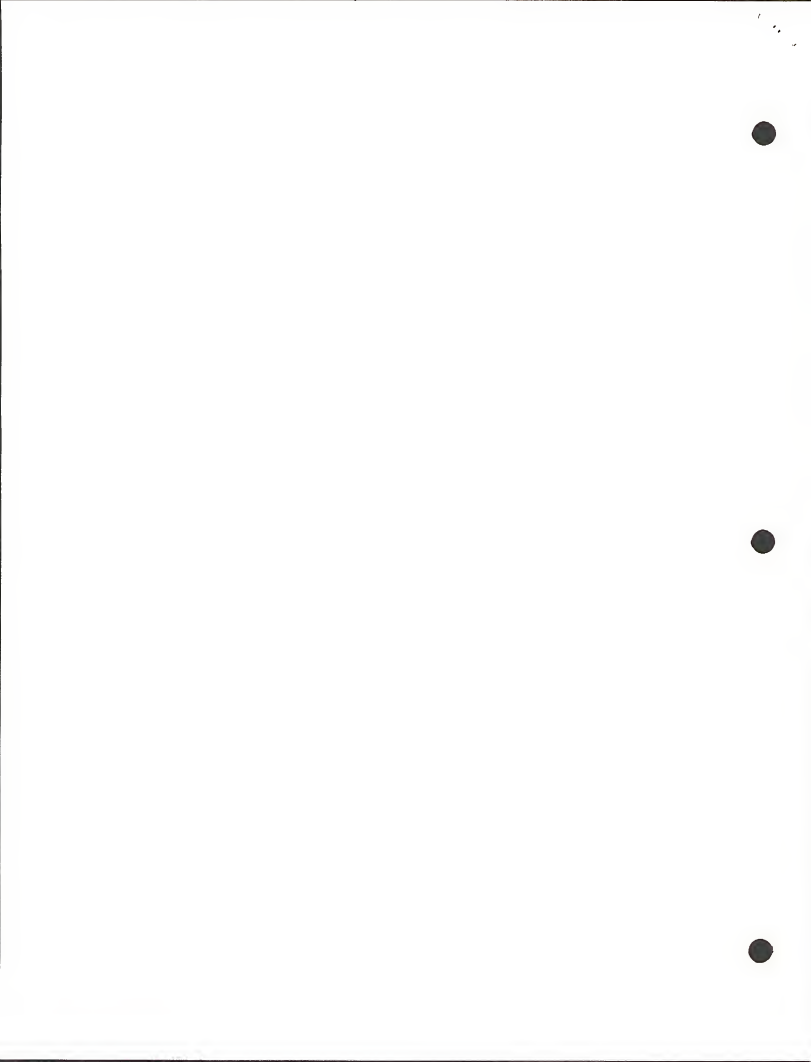
or fall through the "rotting" bridge and, second, the inability to plow the snow off the bridge.

Neither of the above reasons are of a nature that would require the County to close the bridge. First, the County should have insurance (other than their own self-insurance) on the bridge and second, any pickup truck equipped with a snow plow could plow the bridge, (I have done it myself in the past).

For many years the county officials have been "building a case" to close Harpers Bridge and finally they have done it (in my opinion illegally) - for their own peculiar reasons or from a strange paternal idea that they know how to satisfy the needs of the public regardless of public objections to their ideas.

My own theory of public bridges and roads is, that once they have been established it is ^{should be} the duty of the elected officials to maintain them for the simple reason that the public has a right to expect continuity. People build homes, take jobs, develop property and generally depend on such continuity of public thoroughfares.

(4) Part of the Old Harper Bridge is made of steel and part is log and timber. In 1972 the entire deck and many of the log beams were replaced after a high water damage. I find it hard to believe that the entire structure is "beyond repair" - if it is, then, why has the County spent so much money fixing it up for a foot bridge since it was closed in December? If the new bridge is indeed to be built, I feel that



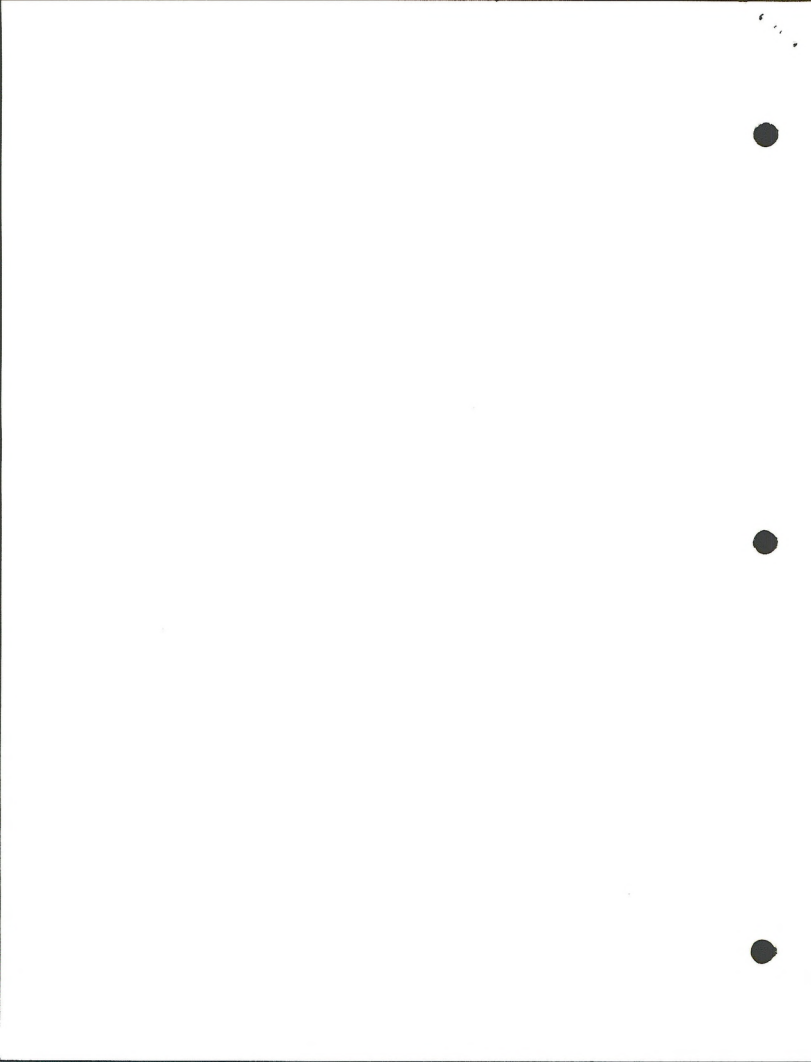
it should be located at the present site of Harpers Bridge. If it is not to be built immediately then the old bridge should be overhauled and reopened. As an engineer, I believe the old bridge could be rebuilt for a sum of money only a fraction of that proposed for the new bridge and the new roads to it. Likewise, I believe one of the big reasons given for the "unsafe" Harpers Bridge closure was the lack of guard rails. I can suggest several ways of adding guard rails to the bridge, especially, if it were rebuilt. This is no big problem.

- ③ the new proposed Bridge location will impose much traffic on Mullan Road which is already overloaded at times of high traffic use. The next thing that would be "necessary" then would be rebuilding 6 miles of Mullan Road to accommodate higher traffic load. Log trucks would also be using the new bridge, which can be at times very heavy use.
- ⑥ I believe that County maintenance of the two "dead-ended" roads would decline (i.e. Harpers Bridge Road and Big Flat Road) if the new bridge were located as proposed.
- ⑦ The attitude nowadays that everything must be done "right" and "fancy" to comply with high ideals of public officials is ridiculous and contributes to overspending for the sake of "keeping up" with the way other places do things. Harpers Bridge was not fancy, but it did the job and could

Continue doing a good job into the next century, with a little T.L.C. and a few bucks. It is not necessary to have a two lane bridge with walkways and bicycle provisions. They don't even have that in downtown Massoula's bridges. Why spend money 6 or 7 miles out of town for it? For instance - Harpers Bridge could be rebuilt using surplus steel bridges available around the area (maybe from Milwaukee RR) - and steel piles instead of wood. Even concrete piers could easily be installed to replace the timber crib piles that have deteriorated.

- ⑧ "Final Closure of Harpers Bridge was announced, dictatorially, by the present County Officials against the will of the people. Basically, it was done to show how bad a new bridge is needed so that the county could qualify for some "free" money. This is wrong. It is not the way government should operate. It should not be allowed to happen. It is, I believe, the responsibility of County government to maintain, replace, repair existing right-of-ways. It is not their responsibility to make decisions against the will of the people. It is not right, either, for State or Federal Governments to "dangle carrots" in front of local officials. It is not "government" money. I say get the hell off the taxpayers back, all of you damned bureaucratic sons-of-bitches.

William D Mungy
4615 Big Flat Rd
Massoula Mt 59801



MISSOULA COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

• Missoula County Courthouse • Missoula, Montana 59802
(406) 721 5700

October 1, 1982

BCC-82-616

MISSOULA DEPT. OF HIGHWAYS
RECEIVED

OCT - 5 1982

Gary J. Wicks, Director
State Highway Department
Helena, Montana 59601

HELENA, MONTANA

RE: Harper's Bridge

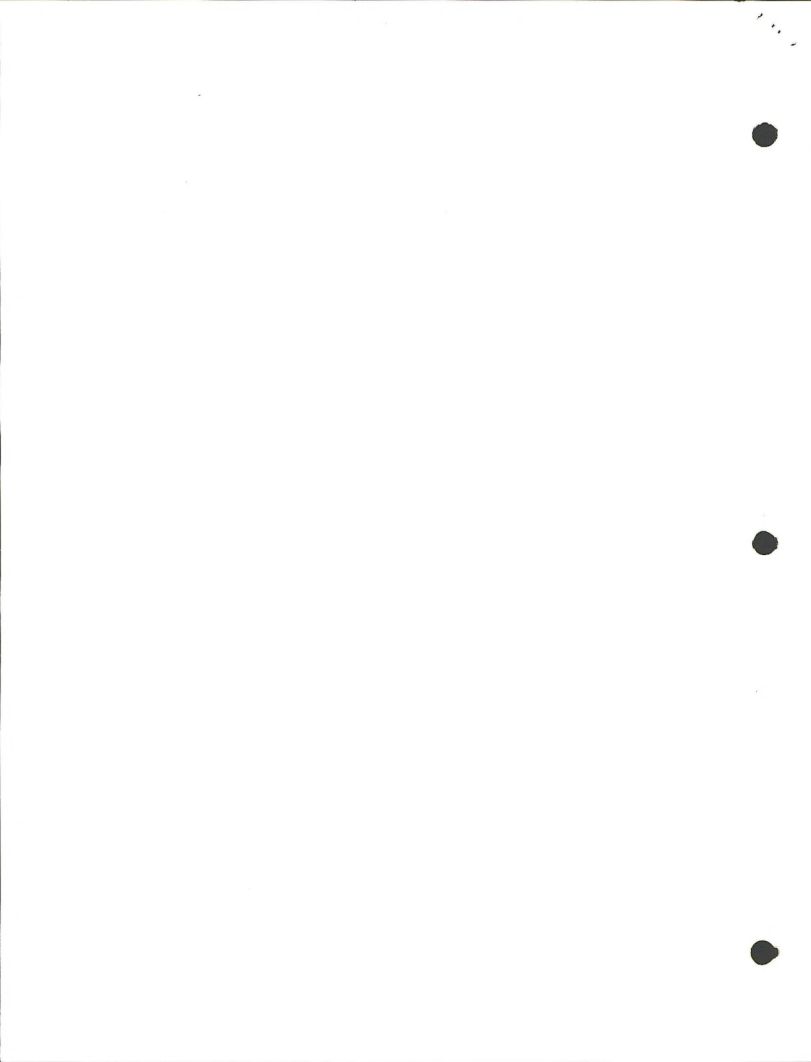
Dear Mr. Wicks:

This is a formal request that your department and the Federal Highway Administration re-open the Harper Bridge Project and consider the additional information we are submitting with this letter.

As you may remember, a Public Hearing was held on May 28, 1981 to receive public testimony on a bridge location and on September 16, 1981 we passed a resolution selecting Alternate "B-1" as the site for a Harper Bridge replacement. During the May 28th hearing and at subsequent Highway Commission hearings there was a vocal and apparently significant opinion opposing the bridge site we selected. Among other things this opposition demanded additional study of the existing bridge site. We have been informally advised that this opposition was one of the major reasons the Federal Highway Administration then levied a requirement for a full environmental assessment. Funds for this assessment were not available from your department nor could we provide them. The project has been on a hold status for the past year.

We have recently received the attached petition which indicates the majority of the Big Flat residents now support the bridge site selected. This petition was not actively solicited by County Government but resulted from a recent local newspaper article re-capping the history of the bridge and the present "hold status". We now believe that the majority of the residents support the site we selected and that local opposition is no longer a valid reason for demanding a full environmental assessment.

During our deliberations between the Public Hearing and our site selection we carefully considered the existing bridge site and obtained data on the major earthslides along the existing access road that was not included in any public testimony. These slides, which are shown on the attached photographs, were one of the major reasons we rejected the existing site. These slides have been in existence for years and are still active. The Big Flat Road used to go along the river at the base of these slides but it had to be relocated in about 1973 because the slides continually covered the road. The new road was cut into the hillside above the slides but as you can see from the photographs the slides have now moved to within 30 feet of the edge of the road. It is only a matter of time until the road will again have to be



rebuilt at another location. We are opposed to a bridge at the existing site because it would drastically increase traffic near these slides. This would be both dangerous and eventually very expensive.

The danger of this road serving the existing bridge site was tragically demonstrated this Spring when a van tipped over the edge and rolled about 200 feet down the bank into the river drowning the occupant. Earlier in the Winter a pickup truck also slid over the edge and rolled down the steep bank but was stopped by trees before entering the river. These accidents reaffirmed our belief that the existing road is too dangerous to accept the traffic increase proposed by a replacement bridge at the existing site. A bridge at the site selected would significantly decrease traffic along the dangerous section of the road.

We believe the existing bridge site is not a valid location for a replacement because:

- 1) It would generate traffic along a very dangerous section of road.
- 2) It would result in a higher cost to the State and Federal Governments because it is the longest bridge site.
- 3) It would result in a higher cost to the County as we are forced to rebuild the existing road because of the safety hazards and the slide problems.
- 4) Significant environmental damage and impact would result from attempting to build a secondary standard road along this steep hillside.

We think these reasons are quite obvious and that neither the State nor the County need to spend thousands of dollars for a study to document them.

In summary we believe the shift in public opinion and the now proven hazards on the existing road amply justify a 'finding of no significant environmental impact' for the bridge site we selected. We request you process this request with an urgent priority. A bicyclist fell off the old bridge this summer and was only saved from drowning through the lucky freak of a floating bicycle. It is only a matter of time until another tragedy takes place on the old bridge or access road.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Barbara Evans
Barbara Evans, Chairman

Germaine Conrad
Germaine Conrad, Commissioner

Bob Palmer
Bob Palmer, Commissioner

BCC: DC/ra
cc: Federal Highway Administration
County Surveyor

Enclosures

ATTACHED Petitions
107 SIGNATURES.
69 Households
10 duplicates on this document
or other petition.

